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THE LITTLE WORKGIRL.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

Pray do not flout this little girl,
  With proud, averted face,
Oh, lady gay, on bright Broadway,
  In costly silks and lace!
Her patient air should plead with thee
  For kindness, and be sure
The garb of toil will never soil
  The raiment of the pure.
In factory, or mill, or shop,
  From dawn till shadows furl
The evening sky, toils patiently
  This pallid working girl;
While you have but to smile, and be
  As useless and as bright
As the lady-fly that flashes by
  To charm the idle sight:
And, after work, her humble joys
  The leisure hours engage,—
To snatch the air in park or square,
  Or trim canary's cage;
While you for concert, ball, or fête
  Renew your irised pride
From fashion's froth, to lure the moth
  Of flattery to your side.
But, were a careful balance struck
  Of relative avail
'Twixt days of work and gifts that lurk
  As in a debtor's jail,—
'Twixt hodden-gray and queenly silk,
  Swift step and dreamy pace,
I doubt if you, when all came true,
  The stern account could face.
So, do not flout this little girl
  With proud, disdainful air,
Fair-dowered maid, in silks arrayed
  That gild the thoroughfare!
Her earnest life should win respect
  And kindness, and be sure
The garb of toil will never soil
  The raiment of the pure.

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THE LORD OF STRATHMORE; OR, The Hidden Crime.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUR OF DARKNESS.

Some weeks had passed since the trial and conviction of Ralph Chandos.

He sat alone in his prison cell. The light of the dim wintery afternoon straggled in through the bars of the small window in a pale and sickly fashion. The face revealed by that light had greatly changed since the hour of its introduction to the reader. The boyish frankness, the brightness and gayety that had once distinguished it had fled from it forever. The simple trust of earlier days had completely vanished. The noble features were set and stern in their expression, the steel-blue eyes that had been noted for their laughing light were grave to sombreness, full of intense bitterness and passionate rebellion at his fate. He had grown grim and full of suspicion. The faith in humanity of two months since had given place to a hard distrust of all mankind, to a profound and awful despair. His blonde beauty that had once been the admiration of society had lost its brightness; he was haggard and wan; his cheeks were sunken; his lips were set in a hard and cruel line.

He felt himself deserted by God and man. Innocent of so much as an evil thought toward his murdered uncle, he had been adjudged guilty of that murder, and condemned to a punishment to him more terrible than death. He was still stunned and bewildered by the calamity that had overtaken him. The newspapers of the country had denounced the jurymen for the verdict that left him life. His old friends had fallen from him as the leaves fall from the sapless tree. Not one of all who had known and loved him, not even his betrothed wife, had been to see him in his undeserved disgrace, in his shame and agony.

He had never liked his cousin, but he could not understand why Brabazon, who had known him all his life, could have accepted his guilt as a fact, and never even paid him a visit of consolation. But his deepest hurt had come from Miss Pelham's supposed defection. That she should have believed him guilty of an appalling crime seemed to him too stupendous for belief. He said to himself that an angel from heaven could not have shaken his faith in her.

He arose from his low pallet and paced the floor with bowed head and uneven steps. He had prayed to die, but the instinct of vitality was strong within him: his life promised to endure for many years. The members of his family had been long-lived, and he shuddered as he thought of the years and years that lay before him, years of bitterness, humiliation, and despair. But that he dared not sin against God and himself, he would have strangled himself with his own hands, and so escape the horrors of his lot.

But now, as he paced his uneven floor, worn with the tread of many a prisoner, he thought not of himself, but of the girl he loved. Her abandonment of him was the very bitterest sorrow of his darkened life. But he did not weep. His hot eyes had not been watered by tears since he had received his unjust sentence. His soul had been the battle-ground of such fierce emotions as dry up the very fountain of tears.

As he thus walked his floor, he heard steps in the corridor without, a key grated in his lock, and the massive door swung upon its hinges. His jailer looked in upon him for an instant, but the prisoner did not raise his head or slacken his steps. The man withdrew and then there was a soft flutter of woman's garments, the door swung shut, and a gentle step approached him.

He looked up, and started back, his eyes full of a stormy wildness, his features quivering.

His visitor was Miss Pelham.

She was heavily vailed as on the occasion of his trial, but he needed not to see her shrouded features to recognize her. As he recoiled, she flung back her vail, displaying her face.

She had changed much since he had seen her. There were bistre shadows under the sweet dusk eyes, a strange pallor upon the lovely young face. The splendid radiance of her beauty was dimmed. She looked as if she had been ill unto death. There was a weary grace in her movements; a slowness that contrasted singularly with her natural vivacity and quick impulsiveness.

"Gerda!" said Chandos, hoarsely.

She held out both her hands to him.

"Ralph!" she exclaimed, and the sorrow and the infinite love in her tones smote him to the heart. "Oh, Ralph! My poor darling! My poor dear boy!"

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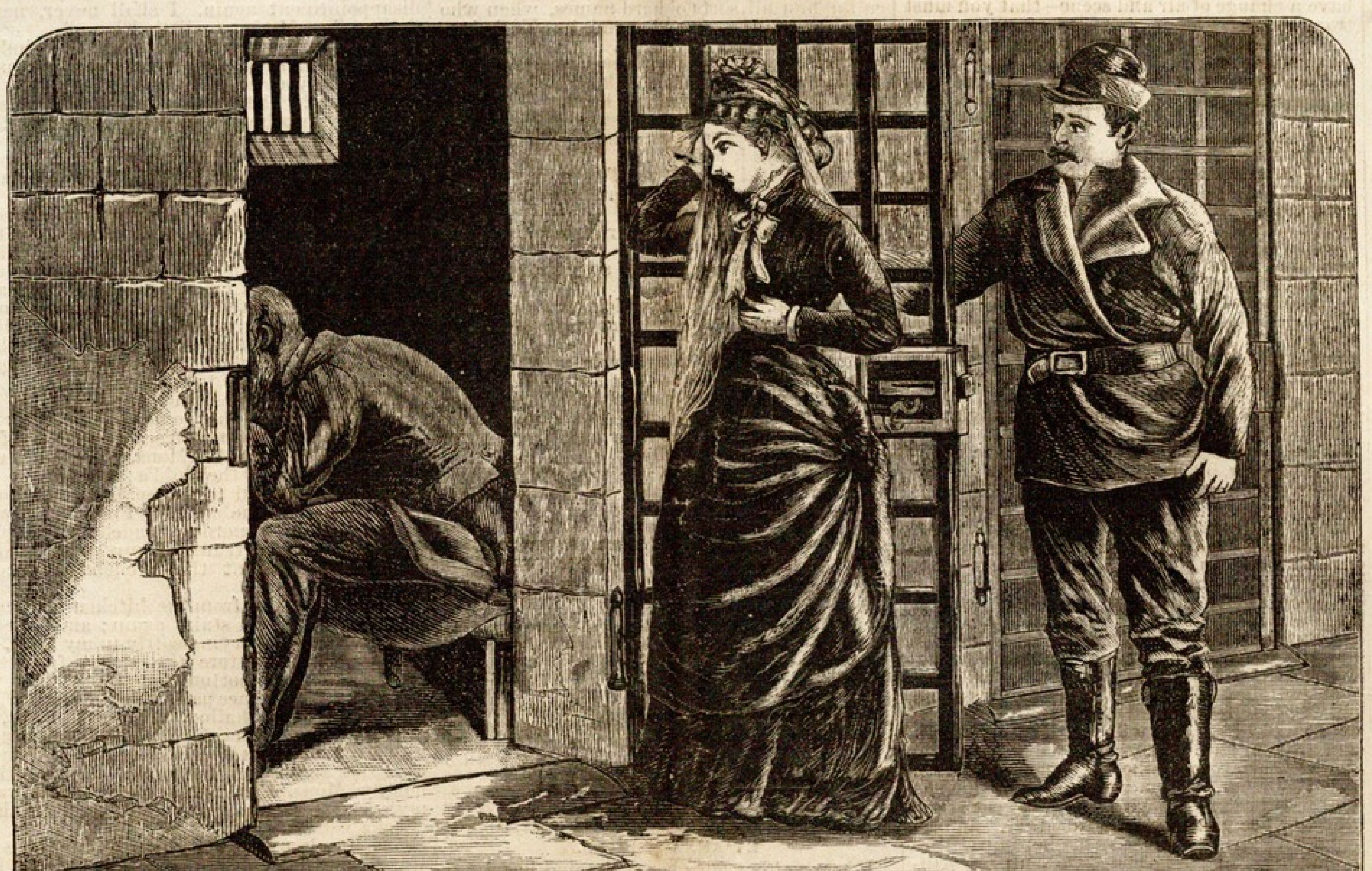

GERDA'S VISIT TO RALPH CHANDOS.

Chandos's lips quivered. His stern face lost its grimness and hardness on the instant. The love and trust, the ineffable sympathy in her tender, yearning look melted all his new hatred of mankind. With a wild and frenzied sob, he sprang to her and caught her in his arms. Her brown head sank to his breast, and the two poor young creatures sobbed together in an agony of grief.

Unable to stand up, for both were weak, they sat down on the side of the low iron bed and clung to each other as if they would never part again. The girl was the first to recover herself.

"My poor, Ralph!" she said, caressing him. "Did you wonder that I did not come? I have been very ill. When I heard of that cruel verdict, I fell to the floor in a dead faint. They carried me to my room, where I have been ill of brain fever. This is the first day I have left our house!"

Chandos could not answer. The tears that had been repressed for weeks were flowing now over his haggard cheeks like rain. She had been ill, and he had doubted her faith in him! He hated himself for that doubt. It seemed to him that he had been mad. Her arms were around him, her true heart beat close against his own. A mad prayer went up from his soul that he might die then and there.

She caressed him softly and silently. She did not speak until his convulsive sobs had nearly ceased and his tears began to flow less freely.

"My poor darling!" she whispered. "It is very hard, but let us not lose our faith in God's justice and mercy. Trust in Him still, dear Ralph. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!'"

"You do not doubt me, Gerda?" said her lover, huskily. "You do not believe me guilty of this murder?"

The girl drew herself away from him. Her dusk eyes flashed like stars. The radiance of a perfect love and perfect trust illumined her rare beauty.

"Doubt you, Ralph!" she exclaimed. "Believe you guilty? Have I not known you all my life? Do I not know you even better than you know yourself? Doubt you, dear? As soon could I doubt the justice of Heaven!"

Ralph Chandes slid upon his knees and bowed his head reverently before her in a supreme joy and thanksgiving. Such love and faith surpassed his wildest dreams. He had brooded over his case during all these weeks; he had weighed every item of the evidence against him, and he no longer wondered that he had been condemned. But that Gerda could set it all aside as of no value seemed utterly incredible.

"My poor boy!" she whispered. "You never doubted me? No, Ralph, you would not!"

"Is there any one besides you who still has faith in me?" asked Chandos.

The girl was silent.

"I knew it," he cried bitterly. "All the world but you, has turned against me, Gerda. But I swear to you that I am innocent of my uncle's murder. I never wished him harm. I know no more who killed him than you do."

"I know that, Ralph, darling. What need for you to tell me that you are innocent?"

"It is a wonder they did not hang me. But I am to be transported to Australia. Think of it, Gerda! I, who looked forward to a life with you, a life of love and honor and usefulness, I am to be chained to a felon, I am to be herded with felons, all my life long—thirty—forty—fifty years, it may be! Think of the shame, the agony, the horror! I would rather have been hanged!"

The girl shuddered.

"Ah, that would have been worse!" she said. "So long as there is life, there is hope. Your uncle's murderer may by found."

Chandos gave a quick start.

"Is any one searching for him?" he asked.

Again the girl's silence answered him.

"You will think me mad, Gerda," he said, huskily, "but sometimes I think that there has been some enemy at work against me. Yet what enemy have I? Was it mere chance that led the murderer to my room after the commission of his crime? Was it mere chance that made him employ my dressing-room to wash off his stains of blood, that led him to steal and use my own dirk-knife to kill my uncle, that led him to hide the knife in my chimney, that caused him to steal my shirt and wear it and then partially destroy it in my grate, leaving enough to fix its ownership upon me? Gerda, it was my enemy who killed my uncle! My enemy, who desired to destroy my uncle and me at one fell blow!"

Gerda looked pale and thoughtful. The idea did not seem to her mad. It had in truth occurred to her before, when trying to solve the mystery of Lord Strathmore's death.

"Can you not think of some enemy, Ralph?" she asked.

He shook his head.

"I never wronged any one in all my life," he said, bitterly. "I have been a simple, kind-natured, warm-hearted fellow, wasting my money upon the first person who wanted it. A man who could commit murder must be utterly depraved. I know no such person."

Gerda opened her lips to speak, then closed them again. He looked at her in surprise.

"Have you any theory?" he asked.

"I have had a great many," she answered. "During my illness, my maid has brought me all the news of the country side. Did you ever know Thomas Crowl, the old village schoolmaster's son?"

"I have seen him. A bright village lad before my time, he went to London and to the bad, I have heard. He used to come now and then to see his father. He had a reckless face, not quite a wicked one."

"He came home a day or two before the murder. His father no longer teaches the village school, and has been in bitter need. The son on his return declared that he had no money, but my maid says that the very day after Lord Strathmore's murder Thomas Crowl paid his father's arrears of rent and also paid an advance of rent for six months, giving the land-bailiff a new ten-pound note. He paid out further sums for his father, and then went back to London, and has not been seen at Strathmore since."

"But the possession of money, even upon the day after my uncle's murder, is not evidence against him, for my uncle's safe had not been disturbed, his pocket-book had not been taken or even touched, as the valet swore, and his jewelry was left on his dressing-table. The murder was not committed for greed. That is perfectly evident."

Miss Pelham yielded a reluctant assent.

"If the murder was not committed for greed," she said, "what then could have been the motive?"

"My uncle had enemies, I suppose. He was not a man to make friends," said Chandos, wearily. "Some enemy of his, who wished also to ruin me, may have killed him. I have thought the case over and over until I am half mad, but I cannot arrive at any satisfactory conclusion."

"Who is the man most benefited by Lord Strathmore's death and your disgrace?" asked Gerda, abruptly.

Chandos started.

"I do not know," he answered. "Who is he?"

"Norman Brabazon, your cousin. Your uncle's death and your conviction of the murder have resulted in his aggrandizement. He finds himself suddenly titled, enriched, honored. He has been appointed Governor-General of Australia. More—since you are legally dead—he has stepped into your inheritance. He is now Baron Strathmore, master of Strathmore Park."

Chandos's features quivered. To know that his heritage had passed to another, and that he was "legally dead," was terrible beyond description.

"Brabazon benefits by my misfortune," he said, hoarsely, "but he is not to blame for that. He was never fond of me, but he was a great favorite with my uncle, who would have preferred Norman to me as his successor."

"You do not believe Brabazon capable of a crime?" asked Miss Pelham.

Chandos looked amazed.

"What a wild question, Gerda!" he exclaimed. "Why, Brabazon is a noted politician, the leader of a party, and has been one of the foremost commoners of England. He is a man of mature years, without the impulses or temptations of youth. He has held high official positions; he expected this very appointment of Governor-General of Australia two months ago. He—your love for me has turned your brain, my poor little Gerda!"

"I did not suspect him of being your uncle's murderer, Ralph. I was only casting over in my mind the possibilities, you know. Somebody committed the crime. Who could it have been?"

"I cannot imagine. We shall never know. I shall suffer unjustly, while the murderer walks the earth unsuspected!" cried Chandos, bitterly. "Ah, if I had only been killed instead of my uncle!"

The tramp of feet in the corridor recalled them to the passage of time. Both turned paler still.

"I have but a few minutes left, Ralph," said the girl, hastily, "and I have so much to say. Papa is waiting for me outside. You are to go away in a fortnight. Don't give up all hope even when you leave England. The truth may—it must—sometime come to light. And I shall wait for you, Ralph, whether it be one year or fifty!"

"Gerda!" and Chandos's voice was sharp with anguish, "when we part now, we part forever. Our lives must be henceforth as wide asunder as Heaven and Hades. I give you back your promise, darling. That promise was given to Lord Strathmore's prosperous heir, not to a convicted felon. You must forget me."

"Never! Ralph; when I gave you my love it was not so light a gift that it might be withdrawn in the hour of your greatest need for it. I shall love you always—be true to you always. I shall devote myself to the task of discovering the murderer of your uncle, and to clearing your name. Hope, Ralph. Trust in Heaven and me!"

Chandos drew her again to his breast in reverent love. It seemed to him that his heart was breaking under its load of passionate despair. He knew that her father would strive to overrule her efforts in his behalf; he knew that all her friends would bring to bear against him their batteries of scorn. And what could she do? A frail girl of eighteen, subject to her father's authority, and that father a firm believer in his guilt.

Again the tramp of feet was heard in the corridor. The massive door swung upon its hinges, and a gruff voice exclaimed:

"Time 's up!"

A look of agony leaped to the girl's eyes. She clung to her lover as if she never meant to let him go. And he clung to her as a drowning man clings to a spar. One moment thus, heart to heart, and then he loosed her from his clasp, and she tottered toward the door.

At the threshold she paused and looked at him with streaming eyes, lit up by her deathless love.

"Trust in God!" she repeated. "And trust in me!"

She passed out, the door clanged shut, and the bolt rattled into its socket. The prisoner was left again to his horrible solitude. He stared at the door with tearless eyes and stony visage until the last echo had died out of the corridor, and then he staggered to his bed and fell upon it in a despair and grief, in a wild and awful anguish, beyond our powers of description.

"Lost!" he muttered. "All lost! My love, my honor, my home, the respect of mankind, all I held dear! Who can have done this thing? Whoever he is, my uncle's murderer, and my secret enemy, may the justice of Heaven overtake him!"

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER STEP TOWARD COMPLETE SUCCESS.

It was the evening of the day upon which occurred Miss Pelham's visit to her lover in jail.

Pelham Wold was brilliantly lighted. The night was cold and dark, with a bitter wind, and now and then a gust of snow. The great mansion, set in a wide and ancient park, and upon an eminence, with its wide windows streaming with light, looked like some great and splendid jewel. In its grand drawing-room were gathered all the luxuries, comforts and delights known to English higher-class life. The great chandeliers were filled with wax candles, many of them burning. Under the low marble mantle-pieces of exquisite sculpture blazed sea-coal fires. Warmth, light and perfume made the long room delightful.

The owner of Pelham Wold, the wealthy banker of Lombard street, was pacing the floor in a thoughtful and discontented mood. His rosy face wore a heavy frown. His usual air of *bonhomie* had given place to anxiety and a look of trouble. He was seriously anxious about his daughter. She was not only his idol, nearer and dearer to him than anything on earth, but she was the heiress of all his wealth, the future mistress of Pelham Wold; his pride and his hopes were alike bound up in her. Hitherto she had been as obedient as a little child, never questioning his will, thinking even as he thought; but now, although loving and obedient still, he felt that she was changed. The state of her health, too, made him very uneasy. Her long illness had left her weak and fragile, and only the day before, the family physician had prescribed for her change of air and scene, and earnestly recommended for her a journey abroad.

"Her mother died of consumption," thought Mr. Pelham, "and the child is very like her mother. I will take her abroad. A change of scene will restore her to health and in time cause her to forget her unfortunate love affair," and he sighed deeply.

He was still walking to and fro when a carriage drove into the porte-cochére. A moment later, the powdered footman flung open the door of the drawing-room, announcing:

"Lord Strathmore!"

The banker started at the sound of that name and halted, as Norman Brabazon, now Baron Strathmore, entered his presence. Recovering himself, he came forward with outstretched hand to welcome his visitor.

The new master of Strathmore Park was dressed in the deepest mourning. His swarthy, hypocritical visage was smooth as ever, but downcast and sorrowful. His small black eyes looked furtively from the corners of their sockets. No traces of his hideous crime were visible in his gentle bearing. A plausible smile lurked as usual about his thin lips. He carried himself somewhat more importantly than formerly: there was at times a new arrogance in his manner, but he had not forgotten the fascinations that had distinguished him, and which had been of so much service to him in his social and political career. He grasped the banker's hand in a warm and lingering clasp, and returned his friendly salutations.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Baron," said Mr. Pelham, the title coming quite naturally to his lips. "This is a bad night outside and I appreciate your visit. Be seated."

He wheeled a yellow satin arm-chair to the hearth, and the new lord of Strathmore sank into it and stretched out his thin hands to the ruddy blaze.

The banker drew another seat conveniently near and took possession of it.

Lord Strathmore looked about the room expectantly.

"I called this evening in the hope of seeing Miss Pelham also," he explained. "I heard that she was out driving to-day. I am glad that she is so far recovered from her long and terrible illness. My man, whom I have sent every day with inquiries, has always brought me very discouraging reports. Until this evening, I have not been able to make my inquiries personally."

"I will let Gerda know that you are here," said Mr. Pelham, reaching for the bell-pull.

The visitor frustrated the movement by a gesture.

"Not yet," he said. "I have something to say to you first, Mr. Pelham."

He continued to warm his hands, and seemed to find some difficulty in commencing his communication. After a brief silence, the banker remarked:

"You told me when I called upon you recently, Baron, that you had received your appointment as Governor-General of Australia. Have you decided to accept it?"

"I have already sent in my acceptance," replied Lord Strathmore. "Of course, the appointment is no longer necessary to me. The present state of my affairs renders it of comparatively little value to me. By a singular and horrible fatality I find myself at an early age—I am but forty-three—the possessor of a lofty title and of one of the richest estates in Great Britain. My income surpasses that of a royal prince. My home is a palace. Yet I find that my ambition is not smothered under my new grandeurs. I should like the exercise of authority as Governor-General of Australia. More than that, the unhappy occurrences which have so altered my circumstances have rendered England temporarily distasteful to me. I desire a change of scene, a thorough, radical change. I have decided, therefore, to go out to Australia for a year or two."

He had other reasons for accepting the appointment—reasons pertaining to Ralph Chandos, but these he did not choose to divulge.

"If you are ambitious," said Mr. Pelham, "there is scarcely any height politically to which you may not attain in England. But I suppose the change of scene will be of great benefit to you, after the recent shock of your great bereavement. How soon shall you sail for the Antipodes?"

"The government advertised a month since for a transport ship to take out the batch of convicts now awaiting transportation," replied Lord Strathmore. "I received notice to-day that a vessel had been secured, the *Clytemnestra*, which has been employed for the purpose before, and she will sail in a fortnight. It is not customary for convict transports to carry passengers, I believe, but I have arranged to sail in the *Clytemnestra*, which has very fine cabin accommodations."

The banker looked surprised. A sudden idea occurred to him.

"If the convicts are sent out in the same vessel," he remarked, "Chandos will undoubtedly be on board."

"Undoubtedly," said Lord Strathmore, calmly. "But he will be a prisoner, and I shall not be brought into contact with him during the voyage. I shall not have another so good opportunity for making the voyage in months, and I cannot allow a false sentimentality to prevent my making use of this. Of course, my cousin's disgrace and punishment are a heavy affliction to me, and I do not mind confessing to you, Mr. Pelham, that one reason for my leaving England at this time is that I may be absent until the horror of my uncle's death and the disgrace of my cousin's punishment shall be in a measure forgotten, or replaced by some newer sensation."

"I know how you must feel, Baron," said the banker, sympathetically. "I quite understand your desire to absent yourself from England for a year or two."

"How does Miss Pelham bear Chandos's sentence?" asked Lord Strathmore, abruptly.

"It was the announcement of it that made her ill. She has been very near death, and her recovery seems to me a miracle. Yesterday she sat up an hour. To-day she visited Chandos in jail."

Lord Strathmore's brow contracted. A red spark glowed in his black eyes which he averted from his host.

"You allowed her to visit him?" he asked, hoarsely.

"How could I help it?" demanded the banker. "She has been at death's door. She sent for me this morning, and when I went to her room she was dressed for her ride. She begged and entreated me to take her to Chandos. At first I refused, but she clung to me and wept and coaxed—she is my only child, Baron, and I had to give in to her at last. She only wanted to bid him a last farewell. I ordered the carriage and took her to Lewes. I easily obtained an order for her to see Chandos, and she had an interview with him. She came out of the cell in an almost fainting condition. I brought her home and she went to bed. Just before you came in she sent me word that she would come down to me in the drawing-room for a few minutes this evening. Poor child! Even in her sorrow for Chandos she does not forget her love for her father."

"Did you see him?" inquired the baron, huskily.

"Chandos? No. He murdered his uncle; he has made shipwreck of my child's happiness. See him? I could not do it, Baron. And why should I see him? I would never have dreamed that he could turn out a murderer. He was so bright, so gay, so frank. He seemed so noble, so true. I used to think that if I had had a son I should have wished him to be like Ralph Chandos. What hypocrites there are in this world!"

"Ah, yes!" assented Lord Strathmore.

"The interview was very hard for Gerda. I should not think her able to come down tonight, only I know that she is anxious to relieve my anxieties about her, and that she will husband her small store of strength for my sake. She loves Chandos, but she loves her father too. If I were to lose her, Baron, my life would be a desert. I have planned a great future for her. It is hard to have one's plans frustrated like this. The doctor tells me that I must take her abroad, or she will go into a decline. So, while you are enjoying power and influence in Australia we shall be journeying slowly about the continent."

Lord Strathmore's dark visage lighted up with a sudden glow. He leaned forward eagerly, his eyes sparkling.

"My dear Pelham," he exclaimed, "what is to prevent your going out to Australia? The voyage would completely restore Miss Pelham. The change of scene would be thorough and beneficial. Say you will go. I beg you and Miss Pelham to become my guests at Government House for the next year."

The banker looked aghast.

"I never thought of such a thing!" he declared. "A voyage to Australia! Why, I should as soon think of going to the moon!"

"Yet, the more you reflect upon it the more you will be inclined to accept my invitation. The voyage is precisely what Miss Pelham needs. You can leave your business for a year or two years—"

"I can do that certainly. My affairs can be arranged in a week so that I could well be absent two years," acknowledged the banker; "but a voyage to the Antipodes—really, Baron, I thank you, but the project does not seem to me altogether advisable. She would see Chandos on the ship—"

"But chained to felons, himself a felon. The sight of him, as she would see him, would inspire her with contempt for him. No woman of self-respect, no lady with Miss Pelham's beauty and position in life, would cling to a man who has become an object of general contempt."

The banker shook his head.

"It's hard understanding women," he said. "I should think as you do, but women are peculiar beings. She would pity him—"

"With a contemptuous pity, Mr. Pelham," interrupted Lord Strathmore. "I know she would despise him, and blush for herself because she once loved him. Believe me, such a voyage would cure her love as well as her failing health."

The banker looked half-convinced. It would be a pleasant thing, he reflected, and gratifying to his pride to be a guest at Government House, Sidney. And perhaps the long sea voyage might, as the baron said, cure Gerda both of her love for Chandos and her ill-health.

Lord Strathmore saw and pursued his advantage. He knew well the weak points of the banker's character, his love of rank, his ardent desire to ally himself, through his daughter, with a person of title. He comprehended that, mingled with his horror at Chandos's supposed crime, was a keen and bitter disappointment that Gerda's expectations of marrying the heir to a title should be frustrated.

"My dear Pelham," he said, gently, "I have a confession to make to you, which I once believed could never pass my lips. When I was only Norman Brabazon, whatever my political successes, whatever my social standing, I could not think of marriage. I had no money with which to keep a wife and an establishment. Of course, I could marry. With my position and connections I should not have found it difficult to marry a young, beautiful and richly-dowered lady, but my heart became fixed upon one, and my cousin loved her. He was the heir to the Strathmore title and estates; he was young and handsome; how could I enter the lists with him? But he proved unworthy, and the stern hand of the law has taken him out of all possibility of rivalry with me. I am Baron Strathmore in his stead; I have the wealth and honors he hoped to inherit; yet they are all empty and valueless to me without the greater good I covet. You understand me? I love Gerda. I desire to make her my wife."

The banker flushed with pleasure.

"My dear Baron," he stammered, "believe me, I appreciate the great honor of your offered alliance. If Gerda would only consent, the hour of her marriage with you would be the happiest hour of my life. To see her Baroness Strathmore—a peeress of the realm—entitled to attend the queen's drawing-room—"

He paused in the enumeration of these possible grandeurs, with the feeling that he would give half the remaining years of his life if he could only secure them for his daughter. His heart warmed to his visitor. As a possible son-in-law Lord Strathmore appeared to him absolutely perfect.

"All this can easily be accomplished," said Lord Strathmore. "You can become the father of a peeress, the ancestor of a line of peers of the realm, my dear Pelham, if you will. And I need not tell you, I suppose, that I will prove a good and loving husband to your daughter. The marriage-settlements can be arranged to please you."

The banker arose and paced the room hurriedly, his heart throbbing high with ambitious hopes. The prize he had most longed for—a title for his daughter—was within his reach. To secure it became from this moment the object of his life. His love for his child made him the more determined to bring about this marriage.

"I appreciate the honor you offer us, Baron," he repeated, "but Gerda is worthy of the highest position that can be offered her. She is fitted by nature to be a queen among women. Her nobility of character, her grace, her wonderful beauty, have always led me to expect for her a high destiny. I have looked forward to a great marriage for her, for she is my heiress, and will have one of the greatest properties in England at my death; but I own to you that no suitor could have presented himself with whom I could have been better pleased than with you. The Strathmores date back for centuries, they are of great wealth, are honored for their sterling virtues, and rank with the few very first families of the realm. As to you personally, Baron, your political successes, your former brilliant marriage, and the lofty connections thereby obtained, and your unstained and noble character, make you worthy of the noblest lady of Great Britain. As Baron Strathmore, you might marry the daughter of a duke. I know all this, and say it freely that you may know that I thoroughly understand the advantages of the alliance you propose. There is only one obstacle in the way of the marriage. Gerda loves this unfortunate Chandos."

"Come with me to Australia," cried the baron. "Let her see her former lover in all his humiliation. Let her realize that he is a convict for life. Let her comprehend the gulf between them. Her love will die a natural death long before the voyage is over. And let me be at hand, Pelham, with the delicate little attentions that ladies love. Let her see me honored, respected, in my glory. She will draw the contrast for herself, and I shall win her love long before we reach Sidney."

"If I thought that, we would go with you. You are right, Baron; you must be right. I can arrange my business, and we will go, if Gerda will consent."

"Ask her to-night Say nothing about my love for her; let that revelation be made by me, in due time. Is not that Miss Pelham's step?"

A light tread was heard without, the clicking of tiny boot-heels on the marble floor of the hall. The door opened and Miss Pelham entered.

She was dressed in deep black, and her face looked white and spectral by contrast. There were dark circles still under her lovely eyes. She was very thin and wan, but all her sorrow and illness had not destroyed or marred her glorious beauty. Lord Strathmore arose. She started at sight of him, not having seen him since the occurrence of the tragedy. He advanced and held out his hand, congratulating her warmly upon her recovery. She let her hand lie in his a moment, then withdrew it with a shudder. Her father placed a chair for her at the corner of the hearth and she sat down.

"You look like a snow-wreath, Miss Pelham," said the visitor, with unmistakable sympathy. "You are very delicate indeed. I am distressed to see you looking so ill."

"We were just speaking of you, Gerda," said her father, resting his hand upon the back of her chair. "The doctor says that you must have a change of air and scene—that you must travel."

"And I have been persuading Mr. Pelham to go out to Australia with me," said the baron. "The sea voyage would restore you. All that is necessary, Miss Pelham, is your consent. I sail in a fortnight, upon the transport ship *Clytemnestra*."

Miss Pelham raised head with swift eagerness. A sudden flash of color leaped to her cheeks.

"The sight of the convicts need not disturb you, Gerda," said her father, "and Lord Strathmore says that the cabin accommodations are very fine. Will you go, dear, for my sake? Think of the splendid voyage and the wonderful country of Australia—"

The girl clasped her hands together tightly. A great joy shone in her dusky eyes.

"I should like it!" she exclaimed, flashing a grateful look at Lord Strathmore. "I will go!"

The baron and the banker exchanged glances of satisfaction and delight.

When Lord Strathmore took his leave, a few minutes later, his heart beat high with joy and exultation. His villainous schemes had prospered beyond his greatest expectations. He was Baron Strathmore, of Strathmore Park, one of the richest and most powerful noblemen of Great Britain. He had gained the wealth, power and honors for which he had so wickedly schemed. Only one thing he coveted was yet unattained.

"But that," he thought, as he lolled back in his luxurious carriage, and was borne homeward through the wintry night, "that will also soon be mine. Gerda will see Chandos as an object of contempt, and will wonder that she ever loved him. She will believe in his guilt, and grow to hate him. I shall be at hand and she will turn to me in her bitterness and grief. I shall win her. When we reach Australia she will soon become my wife. In two weeks then we shall be upon the sea together," and he laughed, "the convict, the banker-papa, Miss Pelham and I. And then comes my opportunity to win her love. Ah! I have a head for scheming! I will stake all I have gained upon my complete success!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

UNCLE BOB'S BEAR STORY.

It was Christmas Eve, and Uncle Bob sat before a blazing fire, a little nephew on one knee and a little niece on the other, while Aunt Katie sat quietly knitting in her own particular corner.

Uncle Bob had no children of his own now, and that made his heart all the warmer toward every child he met.

"Tell us a story, uncle," said little Dan, looking up from Uncle Bob's left knee.

"I know a pretty good bear story," replied Uncle Bob, with a sly glance at Aunt Katie.

"Oh, tell us *that*, please!" cried little Fannie from Uncle Bob's other knee, her pretty face all aglow with eager curiosity.

"Thirty years ago," Uncle Bob began, "it was a wild country out here. The woods was full of bears and wolves, not to speak of other varment, and the settlers had to keep a sharp lookout, I tell you.

"I was a young man then, and reckoned the best lookin' chap in these parts," Uncle Bob continued, with another glance at Aunt Katie.

The latter looked back at Uncle Bob with her usual quiet smile.

"You know it yourself, Katie," returned Uncle Bob—"leastways you thought so once."

Aunt Katie blushed and went on with her knitting.

"Whatever may be said o' *me*," Uncle Bob resumed, "there was a gal in the neighborhood as hadn't her match for fifty mile around."

"Now, Robert," expostulated Aunt Katie, "what put such nonsense in your head tonight?"

"It's only the sacred truth," Uncle Bob protested; "she was my first sweetheart, and her name was Katie."

"The same as auntie's," interrupted little Dan.

"Jest so," said Uncle Bob. "That's what they call a coincidence."

The big word reduced little Dan to silence, and Uncle Bob proceeded:

"Katie's father was the richest man in the settlement. He'd moved out early, had helped fight the Indians, had been sent to the Legislatur', was a Justice o' the Peace, and owned more'n a thousand acres o' land. We all called him 'The Squire.'

"Katie and me'd been as good as engaged for a couple o' year; but, you see, I was too sheepish to speak to the squire. I wanted Katie to do it, but she said it wan't none o' her place, and so matters stood.

"At last a sniptious-lookin' chap—his name was Sam Tibbetts—come out and started a store and grocery at the cross-roads. He wore store close, and hed long curly hair, which he kep' 'iled to sech an extent as disgusted all the fellers and enchanted all the gals.

"None of us had any chance when *he* was about. It was nobody but Mr. Tibbetts. He cut us all out by turns. If you took a gal to meetin' or to singin' school, expectin' to see her home, jest as you stept up at the close of the exercises to offer her your arm, ten to one but Mr. Tibbetts would scronge in ahead, and your gal would walk off with him, leavin' you the mitten.

"He come it over the squire by agreein' with him in politics, especially on the wolf-sculp bounty question; so't when he begun to pay attention to Katie, the squire looked pleased like.

"I don't know if Katie wanted to make me jealous, so's to bring me to the p'int; anyhow, she seemed to take a shine to Mr. Tibbetts, which drove me half mad. I'd a thrashed that gentle youth outen his paten' leather boots, but he was allus so polite that there wan't no decent way o' quar'lin' with him."

"But you're a long while comin' to the bear, uncle," put in little Dan.

"We're a'most at him now," said Uncle Bob.

"Nancy Hopkins give a quiltin', and everybody was invited. The gals was to quilt the quilt durin' the day, and the boys was to come and dance with them in the evenin', and then see 'em home.

"I went over to the squire's to engage Katie, but she said, with a sassy look, she was much obleeged—Mr. Tibbetts hed jest been there afore me. The eend of it was thet I went away in the sulks, and didn't go to the quiltin' at all.

"Well, that night, as Mr. Tibbetts was seein' of Katie home, and they was walkin' along, talkin' po'try about the moon which was three-quarters full and shinin' down bright, what do you think come bulgin' out into the path right afore 'em?"

"The bear!" exclaimed little Dan, excitedly.

"The bear!" echoed little Fannie, turning pale.

"Well, yes," said Uncle Bob, "it *was* a big black bear. He give one fierce growl, and Mr. Tibbetts, jerkin' his arm loose from Katie, took to his heels and run for dear life. He didn't holler 'murder!' for fear the bear'd hear him and take him at his word."

"The big coward!" muttered little Dan, clenching his tiny fists.

"So he was," said Uncle Bob.

"But poor Miss Katie?" inquired little Fannie, from whose eyes the tears began to drop.

"The bear," continued Uncle Bob, growing excited as he neared the climax of his story, "jest r'ared up on eend, cotched hold of Katie with his fore paws, hugged her to his shaggy breast, and give one bound, carryin' her off into the forest!"

Little Fannie sobbed. Little Dan's eyes flashed, but in spite of him were full of tears.

"Oh! Robert, you shouldn't frighten the children so," said Aunt Katie, looking up and dropping a stitch.

"Don't cry, my dears," said Uncle Bob, patting each of the little heads; "'all's well as eends well.'

"Mr. Tibbetts had hardly finished tellin' the squire about his darter bein' kerried off by the bear, in spite of Mr. Tibbetts' gallant efforts to rescoo her (in proof of which he showed the scratches he'd got in runnin' through the bushes,) and the squire hedn't near got done callin' him all sorts o' hard names, when who should walk in, safe and sound, but Katie herself, and me escortin' of her.

"'Bob Staples,' says the squire, graspin' of my hand, 'except a father's blessin'!'

"'I do,' says I, bowin' my head.

"'But the bar?' says the squire.

"'I'll make you a present of his hide to-morrow,' says I, lookin' big.

"'How ken I reward you?' says he.

"'Now's the time or never!' says I to myself, pluckin' up courage.

"'By givin' me your darter for a wife!' I answered.

"'Air you willin', Katie?' says the squire.

"'I am,' says she.

"'Me, too,' says I, not waitin' to be axed.

"'Jine your right hands,' says the squire.

"We jined 'em.

"'By virchoo of the authority vested in me as a jestice o' the peace,' said the squire, solemnly, 'I pernounce you husband and wife. Whom God hath jined together let not man put asunder!'—and no man hain't neither!" added Uncle Bob, proudly.

"Then it was Aunt Katie after all!" cried little Fannie. "Oh, auntie, weren't you ever so much frightened when the bear carried you off?"

"She *would* a ben," said Uncle Bob, "but you see the bear, as he whisked her away, whispered somethin' in her ear."

"How could a bear whisper, *I* should like to know?" objected doubting Dan.

"Well," replied Uncle Bob, "I may as well come to the *moral* of my story. It was myself, dressed in a bear's skin, that carried off your aunt and frightened poor Tibbetts out of his wits."

The little ones clapped their hands with glee.

"Now hang up your stockin's for Santy Claws, say your prayers like good children, and go to bed," said Uncle Bob, setting down his listeners and going across to plant a kiss on Aunt Katie's ruddy cheek.

WEEZIE'S CHRISTMAS.

BY ANNA SHEILDS.

It was so long since her real name had been changed to Weezie that I do not think any one in the big boarding-house where she lived had the faintest idea what it had been. As for a surname, the poor little waif never had one, apparently.

She was a small damsel of about twelve, her age being wrapped in the same cloud of mystery as her cognomen. Her face was a pure oval, but too thin for beauty; her hair, cropped close, was black and glossy, and her eyes were true Southern eyes—[illegible], soft, velvety, black as midnight, and fringed with heavy silken black lashes.

Poor little Weezie, she was that most forlorn of all humanity, a charity child in a boarding-house, the slave of a hundred ever-changing caprices, the earliest to rise, the last to retire, trotting about upon the smallest of feet covered by the clumsiest of shoes.

The child was fond of me. I was as kind to her as my situation as music teacher permitted. Her story, as Mrs. Leavitt, the landlady, told it to me, was very brief. Her mother, described as a "foreign body," had taken the best room in the house and said that her husband would follow in a few weeks. She had paid promptly for one month, and then, to quote Mrs. Leavitt again, "turned round and died."

A trunk of papers and clothing, the latter I strongly suspected more valuable than Mrs. Leavitt was willing to admit, was the sole legacy for the child. But Mrs. Leavitt had kept her to do "odd chores," and five years had passed without her being claimed.

December was nearly gone, and Christmas coming, when Mons. Chatelan, a Frenchman, who had lived in Brazil for many years, came to New York after an absence of a year or two from that metropolis, and declaring himself weary of hotel life engaged Mrs. Leavitt's second story front. He was a man of forty or thereabouts, tall and slender, with a handsome face, bearing the impress of heavy sorrow. But he was soon a favorite among the boarders, having a gracious courtesy that was at once simple and refined, and speaking English well, though with a strong accent.

Weezie worshiped him at a long distance. He would sometimes pat her cropped head gently and tell her to be a good little girl, and Weezie would live in a silent ecstasy for hours after the caress. It was strange that the child was so strongly drawn to him, for she seldom saw him, and many of the young gentlemen in the house had been far more lavish in pennies and candy. But from the first, Weezie's large soft eyes never rested upon Mons. Chatelan but with an expression of worshiping affection.

"I feel him in my heart like an angel," she whispered to me once, when the Frenchman's hand had rested a moment upon her head.

It became a habit during my residence with Mrs. Leavitt to have music often in the evening, and I was frequently called upon to sing or play. Mons. Chatelan was an enthusiastic lover of music, and complimented me often. He discovered that I spoke French, and afterwards always addressed me in that tongue.

And this brings me to Christmas-day. It was a holiday for me, and I went to the parlor in the morning and was about to open the piano, when Mons. Chatelan entered the room.

The cloud of sorrow had deepened on his handsome face, and he sighed heavily as he said to me:

"Another disappointment. Pardon! I forgot you did not know my story. Will it weary you to hear it? You are so sympathetic, so kind, I should like to tell you."

I said, and truly, I should not be wearied with any confidence he placed in my keeping.

"It is long ago, more than five years," he said, "since I was one of the happiest men in the world. I had left France ten years before for Brazil, and invested a small patrimony in diamond-speculating, buying directly from the finders of the stones.

"My wife and three children were my companions in an exile that had no pain, and our home was in one of the loveliest spots in the beautiful tropical country.

"When my Leon, my oldest boy, was twelve years old, a malignant fever broke out in the village where we lived, and spread with terrible rapidity.

"I had at that time made a collection of the most valuable of my precious stones, which I intended to bring to New York for sale, knowing I could realize a sufficient fortune to enable me to return to France and live in comfort for the remainder of my life."

Just at that moment I saw Weezie glide into the room and crouch down behind the window curtain, her eyes fixed upon Mons. Chatelan as if fascinated. Knowing her childish worship of the foreigner, and trusting to the foreign language to keep his confidence inviolate, I said nothing to the child. With lips apart and eyes dilated she listened to him silently.

"But," he continued, "while I was making my final preparations, and hurrying to complete them, Leon and Louis, my brave beautiful boys, were both stricken with the fever and died, after an illness of two days. I became panic-stricken, and hastily gathering up my diamonds, hurried with my wife and only remaining child to the nearest sea-port. But soon after my departure my agent wrote me that the fever had abated, and I resolved to return and complete my business, sending my wife and child to New York upon the steamer where I had already engaged passage.

"I concealed the diamonds in a false drawer in my wife's writing-desk, and giving her sufficient money for her expenses, promised to follow her in a few weeks. She was to write by every steamer, and I heard of her arrival safely, and then that she intended leaving her hotel to take rooms in a private boarding-house. The next steamer brought no letter, nor the next, and I came here in an agony of terror only to meet its realization. I could find no trace of my wife. I advertised for three years, but in vain. Then I returned to Brazil, but I was tortured by the loss of all I held dear, and though I was making a second fortune rapidly, I was irresistibly drawn back to this city. I advertise constantly and receive letters in answer every day. This very morning I have followed a clew only to meet disappointment again. I shall never, never find my lost Marie, my little Eloise."

Here a small figure rose from the window and came slowly, slowly forward, murmuring in purely accented French:

"It is me! Little Eloise! It was Leon and Louis my brothers who died! Mamma died and papa was to come—papa!"

And then Weezie dropped white and senseless across the feet of Mons. Chatelan, who caught her in his arms, crying:

"What does she say? The servant! Eloise!"

"I flew to my room for restoratives, and the Frenchman followed me carrying the child. My quick jerk at the bell was followed by the appearance of Mrs. Leavitt, hot and indignant at being interrupted at such important business as preparing a Christmas-dinner. Her wrath was not diminished, at the sight of "that Weezie," lying upon my bed, while Mons. Chatelan and myself tried to revive her.

"Well, of all impudence!" she began.

But I interrupted her somewhat sharply:

"You have the papers Weezie's mother left," I said. "Get them for Mons. Chatelan to examine. He knows the child's parents."

She was inclined to refuse, but some hope of benefiting, if the wealthy Frenchman was inclined to be generous, made her comply. She brought the trunk to my room, and I knew in a moment the Frenchman recognized it.

Then some odor from the kitchen hastened Mrs. Leavitt down stairs again; and Weezie was reviving and crying softly in my arms.

Mons. Chatelan tore the papers from the trunk, and at the bottom found a small writing-desk. With a face pale as death, he touched a spring and a shallow drawer slid out, a drawer perfectly concealed when closed. Upon its velvet cushions blazed a sea of quivering, changing light—the diamonds. Closing this hastily, Mons. Chatelan took his child from my arms, and large tears rolled down his thin cheeks as he sobbed:

"To think my dear child was here, here in this house, while I was searching the city for her. Eloise, child, can you tell me of your mother?"

I would have gone, but a gentle hand detained me, while to my surprise the child, in the long forgotten tongue, often hesitating for a word, told her father of her mother's illness, when, the poor child said:

"She would not speak to poor Eloise, but tossed her arms, with her cheeks red—red like fire, and called for Leon, Leon, all the time. I knew it was not brother Leon, papa, but you, she was calling. I prayed every day to God to send you, but you did not come."

"Ah, my poor Marie! And you—have you lived here ever since, a servant?"

And Mons. Chatelan ground his teeth as he uttered the last word.

"Yes, I had nowhere to go. I could not talk like the others here for a long time. Then I forgot how mamma talked, until I heard you talking to Miss Gordon this morning. Ah, papa, she has been so good to your poor Eloise."

"Never mind that now," I whispered; but I was not heeded, as little Weezie told her grateful story, and her father spoke words that proved his appreciation of any kindness to the child.

It was a Christmas long to be remembered in the life of Eloise Chatelan. When I had filled my commission to provide a suitable dress for her, her father took her out in a carriage, and every longing of her childish heart must surely have been gratified in the bundles of books, games, and toys she brought home.

In the evening there was a perfect reception in the parlor, all the boarders bringing some trifling gift with their congratulations.

But the next day Mons. Chatelan left the house. Its associations were too painful to him. He gave Mrs. Leavitt a hundred dollars for Weezie's board, but told me she was overpaid a dozen times by the wardrobe and jewels of his wife. And she was afraid to murmur, knowing how valuable were the goods that she had appropriated.

Another Christmas is fast approaching, and there is to be a quiet wedding in the morning, for Mons. Chatelan has asked me to fill the place of his lost wife, and I love him too well to refuse. In my wardrobe there hangs a fleecy dress of white merino and swan's-down that will fit Eloise Chatelan, who is to be my bridesmaid, and is enthusiastically happy at the prospect of her new home, and her new mamma. And Mons. Chatelan looks forward to a house warming in the evening, the glories of which he promises shall surpass even that most memorable of receptions, Weezie's Christmas.

A THOUGHTFUL WIFE.

Doctor S——, whilom Professor of Hebrew in one of our theological colleges, had a strong impression that his wife was not the most tender-hearted woman living, and it had even entered into his imagination that she was not capable of deep and self-sacrificing love. In fact, he had more than once let her see how his mind was bent in that respect, and be sure that it did not at all mend the matter.

One day the doctor had gone to a neighboring town, to visit a friend, on foot. On his way home, and when far from any human habitation, a sudden shower befell him,—aye, it quickly came to be a storm, with lightning and thunder, vivid and crashing. The poor man was in a terrible plight. He was subject to rheumatism, acute and painful, and a thorough wetting by rain would be sure to bring it on. As a strange and ghostly luck would have it, at that moment the old sexton came along upon his hearse. He had to drive directly by the doctor's door. The good man hailed him, and begged for a ride.

"I shall die if I get wet," he said.

"There aint room up here, Doctor, for only one, and a plaguey small seat at that; but if you're a mind to get inside. Sakes alive! I'd rather ride in there strong and well than dead."

The doctor did not stop long to consider. Any port in such a storm as that, he thought, as he crept into the body of the hearse, and pulled the narrow door to after him.

In due time—just before noon—the sexton pulled up at the doctor's door, and the good wife, who had chanced to be standing at the front window, when she saw the ghostly equipage stop at her door-stone, went to see why it was.

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Prout, what've ye stopped here with that dreadful thing for?"

"I have the doctor—your husband—inside, Madam."

"Goodness me! Who'd 'a thought it! No more midnight trampin' over them everlastin' old Hebrews!—Sally!—Sally!"—suddenly turning, and directing her voice down into the cellar-kitchen—"take that mutton out of the oven! Take it right out! It'll make dinners for to-morrow, and—"

She stopped suddenly, for just then she saw her husband crawling out from the hearse. She saw this much and then retired within the citadel. What transpired there we cannot say. It were better not to tell, perhaps, even if we knew. C.

WIT AND HUMOR.

Two friends were recently attacked by Indians in Arizona, and escaped on mules, though the arrows of the savages whistled by them in flocks. One mule being faster than the other, his rider sang out: "Joe, why don't you come along?" Joe, who was urging his mule along with desperate energy, replied, as an arrow grazed his ear: "Do I act like a man who is throwing a race?"

"Madam, do you know that you possess one of the best voices in the world?" said a saucy fellow to a lady. "Indeed, do you think so?" replied she, with a flush of pride at the compliment. "I do, most certainly; for, if you hadn't, it would have been worn out long ago." For the first time in her life, that woman hadn't a word to say.

"What is the price of this?" said a young man to a lady saleswoman at a church fair, holding up a ten cent pincushion. "Three dollars," said the lady. "You'd better be careful," said the young man solemnly, "how you're caught selling these at three dollars apiece, or you'll be indicted for robbing the males!"

"Ma," said a little four-year-old, "I saw something run across the kitchen floor this morning without any legs! What do you think it was?" The mother guessed various legless worms and things, and finally gave it up, when the little fellow said: "Why, ma, it was water."

In response to a question as to his business, a witness replied: "I'm a retailer of wet goods." "*Wet* goods!" exclaimed the judge. "What are they?" "Liquors, your honor," said the witness. "Oh yes, I see. *Wet* goods; you mix 'em with water," responded his honor.

A man noted for his stupidity, being ill, it was reported that the doctors called his illness brain fever. "Then," said an acquaintance, "the doctors are fools, for that man hasn't brains enough to serve as a foundation for a fever."

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard," said a gentleman to a tramp who solicited help. "I know a better thing than that," said the tramp, with a wink. "What is it?" asked the gentleman. "I'll start a savings bank," answered the tramp.

An atheistical physician wishing to annoy a bashful young clergyman, said, "How was it that the patriarchs lived to such an old age?" "I guess it was because they never took any doctors' stuff," was the reply.

A noted gourmand, meeting a friend, complained of being unwell, and said he had lost his appetite. "If that's so," said the friend, "I hope that no poor man will find it, for it would ruin him in a month."

It is supposed that the reason Hymen is represented with a torch is to indicate that marriage throws light on those little imperfections which are not seen during the days of courtship.

"Didn't you guarantee that that horse wouldn't shy before the discharge of a cannon?" "Yes, I did, and I'll stick to it. He never shies till *after* the cannon is fired."

"I would not say," said a witness, "that the defendant lied, but I will say that he made a most ingenious and deceptive use of circumstantial evidence."

A young woman in Yorkshire, England, whose name is Hitty Maginn, is said to be much annoyed because she has been nicknamed "Hit'm ag'in."

There is one thing which an old man in Connecticut is always ready to give to every one who asks him for help, and that is a piece of his mind.

This seems to be a very "off" year with a great many financiers. They are off to all parts of the world beyond the reach of United States law.

What is the difference between a poor gun and a hired masquerade costume? One is fired and doesn't hit, and the other is hired and doesn't fit.

A statistician thinks that the kind of flower which is oftenest raised by the mother of unruly boys, is the lady's-slipper.

A miller's daughter may be the flour of the family, but she often "sacks" the young farmers who come to the mill.

A countryman seeing a carriage load of rich people passing by, exclaimed: "Money makes *them air* go!"

A Boston paper wants to know if it is any harm for young ladies to sit in the lapse of ages.

CURRENT ITEMS.

Mrs. Elizabeth G. Allen, said to have been the oldest person in New England, died on Thanksgiving Day, at Charlestown, R. I., at the great age of one hundred and five years, five months and seven days. Her mind and memory were good to the last. She well remembered many incidents of the Revolutionary war, particularly the burning of New London, Conn., on September 6, 1781, when she was a girl ten years of age.

A man named Sears, living near South Londonderry, Vt., who had a trouble in his leg which kept him confined, attempted to turn over in bed recently, when the leg broke in two a little above the knee. On being amputated the bone was found to be dry and brittle and full of holes like a honeycomb. The amputation seemed to change the condition of the bone and blood, and Mr. Sears rapidly recovered.

A party of a dozen boys who were out skating near Lykens, Pa., the other day, visited an old powder mill near by, and filled their pockets with powder which they there found, then built a fire, put a large quantity of powder in an old dish and threw it in the flames. The result was an explosion which seriously burned four of the lads and inflicted painful injuries upon the others.

At Ashland, Miss., a few days ago, Homer V. Hunt was challenged to fight a duel by C. Mason Lane for saying of a young lady friend of the latter: "How I loathe any girl who is her equal!" He accepted, and as both were excellent shots the distance was extended from fifteen to thirty-five yards, but Hunt was killed and Lane mortally wounded at the first fire.

Two servants in Harrisburg, Pa., in the absence of the family, went to bed on Saturday night, after blowing out the gas, and were found insensible on Monday morning, but were restored to consciousness by prolonged efforts. Fortunately there was a hole in the ceiling of the room and an opening in the floor, which saved them from death.

A leopard that escaped from a menagerie in the vicinity of Richwood, Ohio, some time ago, was recently killed by a large hunting party organized to destroy it. It had terribly lacerated four persons who previously attempted to hunt it down, and in the last fight it killed several dogs.

Hon. John H. Burleigh, who was a member of the Forty-third and Forty-fourth Congresses from the first district of Maine, was killed on Wednesday night of last week by his horse plunging off a bridge at South Berwick, Me., where Mr. Burleigh resided.

A large barn owned by Charles E. Paddock, of Meriden, Conn., was burned a few nights ago, and in the ruins were found the bones of a man that were supposed to be those of a tramp who had crawled into the hay, and probably set fire to it while smoking.

The prisoners in the jail of Bucks county, Pa., made two desperate efforts to escape one evening lately. The second time they tore out the windows of their cells, and the sheriff had to call upon the military to suppress the revolt.

One day recently Joseph Mellton went into a mill near St. Joseph, Mo., where a man named Brown was at work, with whom he had had a feud for several years, and shot him dead with a double-barreled shotgun.

A citizen of New Haven was found lying fatally injured under a bridge in that city, the other morning, he having fallen off the bridge the night before while intoxicated.

As a drunken man was lately walking on the railroad track at Gilbertville, Mass., a train came suddenly upon him, and knocking him into the air inflicted fatal injuries.

Eli Barrot, acting French consul at Norfolk, Va., fell through a trap door in a bank in that city on Monday a week ago, and was fatally injured.

A building in course of erection in St. John, N. B., tumbled down on Thursday of last week, and several men were buried in the ruins.

A little daughter of George Wing, of Livermore, Me., was burned to death the other day, by her clothes taking fire from an open grate.

A Chinaman in Oakland, Cal., who had stolen a diamond worth two thousand dollars, swallowed it to escape detection.

A child at Berlin, Ontario, was recently choked to death by a marble which it had playfully put in its mouth.

James Driscoll, a young plasterer, recently fell from a staging in St. John, N. B., and was instantly killed.

LITTLE MARGARET.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

Sweet little Margaret, scantily dressed,
Patiently toiling and doing her best,
All her soft hair, bright as silk of the corn,
Close to her head, like a poor laddie's shorn.

Could she look back at the cold wintry day,
When at the door of the work-house she lay,
Mem'ry would render her poor little soul
Sadder than ever as weary days roll.

Sixteen long summers have passed o'er her head,
Since she slept low in that cold, dreary bed;
Five toilsome years have her busy hands scored,
Since she was "bound out for bed and for board."

Poor are her garments, and shoes she has none;
This brings the blushes—for Maggie has grown
Tall, like the shade-flower; and certain unrest
Tells of the maidenly thoughts in her breast.

Other girls learn at the school and the kirk,
She must know nothing, do nothing but work;
Other girls boast of their ribbons and lace,
Maggie has nothing but beauty and grace.

Now, pretty Maggie, a secret I'll tell:
Young farmer Grey, that you meet at the well,
Watches you covertly, pitying your life,
Fain, by and by, he would make you his wife.

Ah! you "won't favor him, when all is done;"
Girls' hearts are riddles as sure as the sun;
Better, perhaps, then, to toil as you do,
Unthanked, than wed without love, and then rue.

A WOMAN SCORNED.

By ELIZA A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF "WHICH SHALL BE HEIR?" "A FATAL MISTAKE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LYNCH LAW—THE RESCUE.

Kit cast a wild look around him, but saw that there was no alternative. Dick still held on to him and the others had closed around him, so he desperately went forward and entered the low passage, several yards in length, which opened into the cave. The others followed, and found themselves in a gloomy looking place, with water streaming down the rocky walls, forming a pool in the floor. A second narrow entrance, which had not been blocked up, led from this into a vast rotunda, from which branched several passages leading no one knew whither, unless such knowledge had been gained by Markley. He said, with a sneer:

"Search for yourselves, gentlemen. I have nothing to show you, for the person you are in pursuit of will certainly not be found here."

He sat down on a huge bowlder lying on the floor, and Dick remained in charge of him, while the others moved away under the direction of Osborn. He was so certain that he could lead the way to the spot in which Manvers was concealed that it was unnecessary to compel the reluctant proprietor of the place to accompany them. Before leaving him in the custody of Dick, however, as a matter of precaution the feet of the prisoner were securely tied together with a rope they had brought with them.

The three then entered a lateral passage, ending in a small enclosed space with a shelf of rock running along one side of the wall. The drippings from the roof had formed a curtain in front of this which glittered brilliantly in the light of their candles. They gained access to the recess by an opening on one side, and to the dismay of their guide found it not only empty, but with no evidence that it had been lately occupied. Osborn said:

"I was certain we should find him here. If you are sure, Mr. Kirke, that your friend has been brought to this place, there is nothing left now but to make Kit Markley speak. There are two other passages known to me for a short distance, but so far as I have explored them there is no place of concealment. They were thought dangerous, and no one ventured far in them. We might get lost, and that would never do."

Kirke said, in a determined tone:

"Manvers must be found, and something tells me that he is not far away. It is useless to waste time in explorations that may lead to nothing. We will deal with that wretch as he deserves, and if he does not speak the truth we will take the law in our own hands, and make him understand that he need expect no mercy unless he leads us to the place in which he has concealed his victim. Let us go back at once and confront him."

They retraced their steps to the rotunda, and found the two they had left seated together on the rock, the negro holding a knife in his hand with which, he stated, Markley had threatened his life when they were left together. It was a table knife, which he had probably snatched up when the first assault was made upon his door, and secreted about him.

Dick chuckled as he said:

"He thought he had me sure, but law! he aint no match for me. I could squash him in my arms till every bone in his body was smashed. When he pulled that ar' thing out'n his pocket, I was ready for him, and it was jes' child's play to take it away from him."

Markley looked up, with a defiant face, and said:

"You found nothing to criminate me, and I now demand that you shall let me alone and go about your own business. I've been punished enough for stabbing Sullivan, and I don't believe you've got any lawful authority to interfere with me."

"You are mistaken there, Kit, for here is the warrant for your arrest on that charge," said Mr. Winter, exhibiting the paper as he spoke. "Whether we have authority or not we shall deal with you as mercilessly as you have dealt with your prisoner, unless you confess your crime against him and show us where he is to be found."

"How can I show you that, when you have seen for yourselves that there is no one hidden here? You dare not do more to me than the law allows."

"We shall see that," said Kirke, sternly. "There is such a thing as Lynch law in this country, and it is good enough for such a miscreant as you are. We shall form ourselves into a court and sit on your case, giving you the punishment you deserve if you refuse to lead us to the place in which I am convinced Julian Manvers is imprisoned."

The face of Markley changed slightly, and after a brief pause, he said:

"You are only trying to frighten me. The worst you will dare to do will be to bind me and take me a prisoner to Fredericksburg. I should get off easy after so long a time, and I can bear a few months' imprisonment."

"You had better make up your mind that we will proceed to extremities with you, if you do not comply with my demand. A rumor of what is suspected has only to be started, and in a few hours the men of the whole county would be on their way here to penetrate into every nook of this cave, and discover what you refuse to tell us. I do not wish such publicity just yet, so I shall force you to speak. With this additional crime laid to your charge, do you suppose that your sentence before a legal court would be less than imprisonment for life?"

These words seemed to impress Markley a few moments; his face fell, and he seemed to be weighing possibilities in his half dazed mind; but he at length said:

"I have nothing to reveal, and it is hard that you will not believe me."

A curious scene followed this denial. A mock court was formed, of which Mr. Winter was judge, Kirke and Osborn, jury, Dick, sheriff, and an informal trial took place, by which the prisoner was condemned to death, Kirke taking on himself the office of executioner.

To the end of the proceedings, Markley looked scornful and incredulous. He refused to speak in his own defense, asserting that he had done nothing wrong, and they would not dare to commit the last outrage they threatened.

But Kirke looked stern as fate, and faced the condemned, pistol in hand, solemnly saying:

"Kneel and ask forgiveness for your sins, for I will have no more mercy for you than you have shown to the unfortunate man who has fallen in your power. Kneel upon the floor, and may God have mercy on your soul."

The solemnity of his manner, at last, had its effect on Markley. He began to believe that his captors were thoroughly in earnest, and his own life might be the forfeit if he refused their demands.

Dick forced him to his knees in spite of his struggles, and the inexorable man in front of him held his pistol, ready to fire, exactly in a line with his head. He cowered to the earth and cried out:

"Don't shoot! don't shoot! for God's sake! I didn't think you'd go so far, but I do believe you mean to kill me."

"Is Julian Manvers in this cave? Yes or no, or I fire."

"It's no use to say no, for you wouldn't believe me," was the sullen response. "Put down that six-shooter and I'll tell the truth. John can't blame me when he knows that my life was at stake."

Kirke lowered his pistol with a half smile, for he had accomplished all he had intended by intimidating the prisoner so far as to wring a confession from him. He said:

"Get up and allow your limbs to be freed. Take us to the place we seek, and remember that if there is any faltering or delay, I am following you with my pistol ready for use."

Muttering some inaudible words, Markley obeyed the command to arise, the rope was removed, and the procession set out toward the side of the cave opposite to that they had explored.

They entered a wide opening which narrowed as they proceeded, and at the end of a quarter of a mile seemed to close in with a solid wall of rock. Fearful of the loaded pistol in such close proximity to his body, Kit hastened to unclose a door similar to the one which had been broken down, and followed closely by the others entered a narrow passage about twenty yards in length, ending in a wide chamber, which seemed to be perfectly empty. He led the way to the farthest side of this, toward a recess before which bowlders of rock had been piled up to cut it off from the wide space beyond.

No words were spoken among the party, for the interest was too breathless at this point of the search to permit them to make a single comment.

Suddenly a startled voice was heard from behind the barrier of rocks, which said:

"Is that you, Kit Markley? Have you come with your wretch of a brother to finish your job by killing me? I hear more footsteps than yours. Oh! if I could only defend myself I would not die like a rat in a hole."

To this despairing cry Kirke replied by rushing forward and shouting in loud tones:

"We have come to rescue you, Manvers, not to destroy. It's I, James Kirke, and you are saved!"

By the time these words were spoken he was beside the shelf of rock, on which a few deer skins had been spread, and on them lay the worn and emaciated form of Manvers, with his feet chained fast to a staple driven in the floor of his dungeon. In a cleft on one side was a pitcher with water in it, and some crusts of bread beside it.

With a cry which rang in the ears of Kirke many days afterward he threw himself forward, clutched the hand that was held out to him, and bursting in such tears as men rarely weep, hoarsely said:

"God has heard my prayers and sent me help when I had almost despaired of rescue. You are just in time, dear friend, for a few more days of semi-starvation and confinement in this horrible darkness must have destroyed me."

While he was speaking the others were busy releasing his feet from the shackles, and Kirke assisted him to rise and stand on the floor. At first he seemed scarcely able to use his limbs, but after making a few steps he found that with the assistance of the others he could walk better than he had dared to hope, after the treatment to which he had been subjected.

"Get me out of this," he gasped. "I cannot feel that I am free till I see the blessed light of heaven once more. I can neither listen nor talk till this deadly chill is taken from my blood, and the gnawings of hunger have been appeased. For days I have been fed only on bread and water. Oh! take me out for Heaven's sake! for I shall go mad, if I am kept much longer in this horrible place. I know now what the blackness of darkness means, and that wretch yonder has been the agent used to inflict these torments upon me."

He pointed to Markley who had made an attempt to steal away in the excitement of finding Manvers, but Dick kept a sharp eye on him, and pounced upon him before he had gone many steps. He had brought the rope along with him, shrewdly thinking that he might have a use for it, and he now tied it around the waist of his prisoner, and fastened the end to his own wrist.

"You'd better believe you aint a gwine to git away from me now," he growled. "You jest try it agin, an' I'll punch yer head till you'll see stars shine. My marster's got a use fur you, *he* has, an' I'm gwine to keep you safe till you're called fur."

This assurance, followed by the accusation of Manvers, completely broke down the courage of the poor wretch, and he pitifully whined:

"I only did what I was told, and if I hadn't been kinder to Mr. Manvers than my orders warranted, he would never have been found alive."

"It is well for you that we did not find his dead body," said Kirke, sternly. "A short shrift and a hempen cord should, in that case, have finished your story, Kit Markley. Make another attempt to escape, and I will shoot you as I would a dog."

With the aid of the others, Manvers was got out of the cave, and he stood enraptured at the outer door of the cabin, watching the sun set, while a large fire was made on the hearth, and some small game, which was found ready for cooking, was laid upon the coals. Corn pone was baked in the ashes, and the half-famished man soon sat down to a meal which he often afterward declared was the most delicious one he had ever tasted. Osborn had with him a flask of brandy, and under the stimulating effects of food and drink Manvers soon declared himself strong enough to descend to the river, and seek more comfortable quarters.

While he ate, Kirke explained to him how he came to suspect the cave to be the place in which he was detained, and what measures he had taken to rescue him.

As he arose from the table, Manvers said:

"I can never be grateful enough to you and to Miss Deering, for your clear sightedness and your prompt action. A little more of what I have gone through, and I must have died. I have not time now to explain to you what I can of the means by which I was brought here, but when we are in the boat I will tell my story."

Kirke assented to this, and the party prepared to leave the mountain cabin.

The suit of clothes Manvers had on when he was abducted had been taken from him when he was imprisoned in the cave, and an old buckskin overcoat with a pair of half-worn nether garments had been put on him. Markley was now required to produce them, together with his shoes and stockings, and in a short time he was ready to leave. Kit had sunk into sullen and hopeless silence, and between Osborn and Dick he submitted to be taken down to the boat without a word of remonstrance.

Kirke and Mr. Winter alternately assisted Manvers in the descent, but with every step in the fresh evening air he seemed to grow stronger, and by the time they gained the boat, which had been hidden in a clump of bushes, he declared he felt well enough to make every exertion that was necessary to reach Fredericksburg that night, and telegraph to Agnes that he was safe and on his way to her; and also to send a telegram to police headquarters in New York, ordering a strict watch to be kept on John Markley till he could appear in person and have him arrested on the charges he had to make against him. As it would be loss of time to turn aside to Kirkwood, his friend agreed to this arrangement, saying that he would go home and bring Mrs. Tardy and Constance to Selwood as soon as possible.

Osborn and Dick were skillful rowers; the young moon was high in the sky, and the cloudless expanse was filled with glittering stars, when they pushed out from the little cove and set out for the point from which they had embarked that morning.

Kirke then reminded Manvers of his promise, and he gave them the story of his abduction. He described his occupation in the office at the time he was attacked by faintness brought on by overwork, and then went on:

"I knew nothing that happened to me for days afterward. I must have been drugged while on my way to the cave from which I have escaped. I awoke to consciousness to find myself in the place in which you found me, and I should have been left to conjecture who had perpetrated this outrage, had not John Markley wished to indulge his mean temper by triumphing over my helpless condition.

"When I was able to comprehend his taunts he came to me and told me that he had hated me for years because I had no confidence in him, and that he only accepted employment from Brenton that he might join with him in ruining me. He laid bare all Brenton's villainies that he might reduce me to despair by telling me that I was to be made the bearer of them. My supposed flight would account for the disappearance of the money which had been embezzled, and no chance would ever be allowed me to prove my innocence. Chained to that rock, where you found me, I was to live and die, and I soon discovered that slow starvation was the method adopted to get rid of me.

"At first Kit Markley shared with me the rough food he prepared for himself, and gave me a sufficient supply, but other orders came to him I suppose, for he soon furnished me only with bread and water, and he took away from me the lamp which had hitherto only served to make darkness visible in the dreary place in which I was confined.

"When that was gone I cannot tell you the horror of darkness that fell upon me. It was a sort of madness, and for hours I feared that my mind was going."

With a sudden choking in his voice he presently added:

"There is nothing more to tell. The tortures of the Inferno cannot be more terrible to bear than those I endured when I thought of my wife, my blighted name, and knew that I was helpless in the hands of men who had no mercy. Measure my thanks to you, gentlemen, by the great service you have rendered me; you have my eternal gratitude; and to Mr. Osborn I hope to be able to make some return for his great kindness in acting as your guide. As to you, Dick, I shall find means to reward you, be sure of that."

Osborn protested that he expected nothing—that he loved adventure, and this promised to be an exciting one, and he was glad to make himself of use.

But Manvers would not consent to take that view of the great service he had rendered him, and, in the time to come, Osborn published a paper of his own through the aid afforded him by his new friend.

The comment of Dick was:

"Marse Julian always was a gemplin."

CHAPTER XXX.

JUSTICE IS DONE—A JOYFUL REUNION, FOLLOWED BY A HAPPY MARRIAGE.

The party reached Fredericksburg sooner than they hoped, and Manvers was in time to take the morning train for New York. Fearful of appearing too suddenly before Agnes, he thought it best to telegraph to her from that place, and ask her to await his arrival at Selwood the next evening. He was also anxious that John Markley should receive no intimation of his escape till he was captured, and safely held to account for the crime he had committed.

Kirke furnished him with money, and it was arranged between them that the former was to return to his own home and bring Mrs. Tardy and Constance to Selwood immediately.

Mr. Winter and Osborn took Kit Markley to the jail, where he was imprisoned on the old charge of murder, that he might be held in safe keeping till called on to testify to the fact that his brother was the agent in abducting Julian Manvers. To save himself he was ready to do this, and voluntarily produced from a secret pocket in his well-worn buckskins the letters sent him by John, giving him instructions concerning his share in that nefarious transaction.

Manvers reached New York that afternoon, and went at once to police head-quarters, and made arrangements to have his unscrupulous enemy arrested before any intimation could reach him of the reappearance of his victim. His statements produced a great sensation among the few in the chief's office at that hour, and he was informed that officers were in pursuit of himself in every direction; that detectives had been sent to Cuba, as Markley asserted that he had gone there, or to some South American port.

He told his story briefly, and explained the means used to remove him to the place of his imprisonment; for Kit Markley, at the last, had told the whole story as far as he knew it himself.

As Manvers had voluntarily returned to his old home his statements were accepted, and two men were sent with him to make the arrest. Markley, unsuspicious of any danger, was asleep in the warehouse, of which he had assumed charge until Brenton's return. He had been out very late on the previous night, and was still partially under the influence of the heavy potations which, of late, he had habitually indulged in when the business of the day was over.

The pass-key which Manvers habitually used to let himself in through the private entrance, he had found still in the pocket of his coat. He accompanied the policemen, and the three noiselessly entered the office and proceeded to a small room opening from it, in which a clerk had formerly slept. Markley was lying across the bed, fully dressed, and his loud breathing and flushed face induced the men to believe that he had fallen down in a fit. Such was not the case, however; he was only sleeping off the effects of a drunken debauch.

"He aint no force," said one of the men, laughing. "We can get the bracelets on him before he gets back his senses."

But at the sound of his voice Markley sprang up, and there was a brief struggle before their object was accomplished.

Uttering a volley of imprecations, he asked:

"What does this mean? What have I done to be treated as if I were a common criminal?"

"You're a most *on*common one, Mr. Markley, and that's why I wanted to help nab you."

"Who is my accuser, and what can he bring against me?"

"There he stands, and when you see him, maybe you won't want any further information."

Manvers had kept in the background till this moment; he now stepped forward, and Markley uttered a loud cry and fell back on the bed; but before any one could speak he again started up and cried out:

"*You* here! It is well that you have come back to meet the punishment you deserve, but why am *I* arrested at your instigation? I should like to have that explained."

"Yes, I am here," replied Manvers. "Cease your bravado, Markley, for it will not serve you. All is known. I was rescued from the place in which your infernal malice caused me to be imprisoned, by James Kirke and a party of his friends. Your brother is in jail in Fredericksburg, and, to save himself, he is ready to testify against you."

"Kit is demented—no one will listen to his statements, or give credence to them. My word is as good as yours, and we will see which one will come off conqueror in this struggle—you or I."

"This is idle talk," said Manvers, turning away. "Do your duty, men. I have nothing more to say to that man till he is brought up for committal."

He turned and went out, leaving Markley blaspheming in a terrible manner.

Manvers had already dispatched brief notes to two of his staunchest friends, and on his return to the police office he found both of them there, and fully informed of the story he had told the chief. They welcomed him as one from the dead, and one of them said:

"I have never for one moment doubted that you had been foully dealt with, Manvers. Such men as you do not commit crime, and I have uniformly defended you. I gave you up as dead long ago."

"We have come to help you so far as we can. Bail will be required for you, and we are ready to offer it to any amount," said the other.

"That is the only service I shall require from you, and a thousand thanks to you for offering it. I have not seen my wife since I came back to the sunshine of heaven, and as soon as the necessary business is dispatched here, I must run down to Selwood, where she is staying with her uncle. I shall return the same day, bringing them both with me."

His friends were both men of high position and wealth, and there was little difficulty in settling the bond, though the sum required was a large one.

On the evidence of Manvers, his furious foe was fully committed for trial and sent to the Tombs. By making great efforts, Manvers succeeded in getting off on the morning train, and soon found himself at Elizabeth. The close carriage from Selwood was waiting for him, and in it he found the professor in a very tremulous condition.

"I could not help coming, Julian, though you asked me not to do so. Poor Agnes obeyed your wishes, but she was very reluctant to stay behind. Oh, my boy! my boy! lost to us so long, restored so suddenly, my heart is too full for the utterance of half I feel!"

"I understand all you would say, dear sir. I knew how you and my darling would be overcome with emotion when we met, so I asked you to let our reunion take place in private. Yet I am very glad you came. I can explain to you on the way why it was necessary to pass this town and get to New York as soon as possible. Agnes may have thought me unkind not to go to her at once, but it was for her sake that I prevented the escape of Markley before he had any idea of what was overtaking him."

"Oh, Agnes understood the necessity that ruled you, and she was thankful that you risked nothing by stopping on the way. My girl is a sensible woman, Julian, and tender as her heart is, she knows how to control her impatience. Since your telegram said, 'safe, and all will be well with me,' she has been trustful and happy, believing implicitly in your assurance, and ready to obey your wishes."

"I know that my darling Agnes is one in ten thousand. But how has she borne this—this terrible thing?"

"She has suffered intensely, but she has been wonderfully sustained. She has said all the time that you would come back to us—would defeat your enemies. But you have changed much, Julian. Where have you been, and what has kept you so long silent?"

"I have been held in durance by others, and when you know all I have gone through, you will wonder that the change in me is not greater. Wait, dear sir, for a little while; that story of wrong and suffering I cannot bear to tell twice over. When Agnes is beside me, with her tender hand clasped in mine, I will tell it all, and then try to dismiss it forever. It has been a horrible experience."

Tom had received his orders to drive as rapidly as possible, and anxious himself to have the sudden appearance of Manvers explained, he obeyed his orders so well that the grounds of Selwood were entered long before Julian expected to see them. The carriage dashed up to the door in fine style, and Agnes was seen standing in the vestibule pale as death and trembling as one with an ague.

At the sound of the wheels she had started to rush out, but her strength failed her, her head reeled, and she felt like one fainting. Manvers reached her side just in time to take her sinking form in his arms, and carry her into the parlor.

But she had not fainted; she was only overcome by the sudden rush of long pent-up emotion, and she wept upon his breast many moments before she could reply to his tender and caressing words.

At length she lifted her eyes to his face, and said:

"Julian, where have you been? What has been done to you, that your face is so changed? And, dear love, do you know that your beautiful hair is threaded with gray?"

"My face will soon recover, I hope, Agnes, from the effects of what I have passed through since we parted," replied Manvers, trying to speak gayly; "and if I remember aright, you admire gray hair."

"It is not unbecoming to you, but if it is the result of mental suffering, I shall never be able to look upon these silver threads without a pang."

"Don't say that, sweetest wife; you will soon become used to them, and some day all will be white, you know, if God grants me length of days."

The professor had lingered without until the first moments of meeting were over, and he now entered the room and deprecatingly said:

"I hope you will excuse my impatience, Julian, but I am most anxious to hear what you have to tell us. Agnes is beside you now, and I think I have restrained my curiosity long enough—I mean my interest—"

"Ah, yes! tell us all, Julian, from the very beginning," said Agnes. "In the joy of being beside you again, I almost forget there is a painful story to tell."

"Yes," replied Manvers, with a faint sigh, "painful indeed, as every story must be which illustrates 'man's inhumanity to man.'"

Again were all the details of his terrible experience given, though he dwelt as briefly as possible on the mental sufferings which had threaded his dark hair with silver, and caused him to dread, more than once, that reason was tottering on its throne.

The two listeners seemed scarcely to breathe while the narration went on, so intense was their interest. At its close, Agnes clasped to her heart the hand she held caressingly in her own, and said:

"Amid all our trials, God has been most merciful to us, my Julian. The book you were examining at the time you became insensible on that dreadful night, is in my possession. It was most fortunate for you that Mr. Markley did not secure it, for its contents are most important to your vindication. I have a curious story to tell you about my lapse of memory, and how it was refreshed."

She paused a moment, and Manvers eagerly said:

"You are indeed my good angel, Agnes, if you secured that book. With its assistance, I hope to recover all that Brenton has embezzled, and return the money to its rightful owners. Go on, dear, I am impatient to know how you gained possession of that which is so important to me."

"You were overtasked and suffering that night, you remember, and when you did not return home at the time you promised, I became so wretched that I insisted on going in search of you. I asked Mr. Denton to accompany me, and we went to the warehouse. All was dark and we could not get in. We concluded that you had gone up town while we were coming down, and hastened to return. As I passed the door which opens from the alley, my foot struck against something on the pavement, and I mechanically stooped and picked it up. There was a vague thought in my mind that it might be something belonging to you, but by that time I was in such a state of doubt and dread, that I was scarcely conscious of what I was doing.

"When I went back and found you still absent, when you failed to come home that night, I became so bewildered with fright and anguish that I could not, the next morning, remember what I had done with the book I had brought back with me the night before.

"And now I am going to tell you something very singular—something which might almost make one believe in supernatural interference. For weeks I have racked my brain in vain to gain a clew to the place where the book was hidden; I believed that its contents might have an important bearing on your future, for I have never doubted yet that God would have compassion on me and open a way to restore you to me, cleared from the charges brought against you. Yesterday morning I had a vivid dream from which I suddenly awoke with the certainty that the hiding place I could not remember had been revealed to me.

"My mother came to me and seemed distinctly to say—'Have you forgotten the secret drawer in your desk?' She touched my brow with the caressing softness I remember so well, and after I was fully awake I seemed still to feel the impression of her fingers. I *had* strangely forgotten that such a thing existed, for I had never used the drawer for any purpose before. I arose at once and examined the desk; with some difficulty I found the spring, and when the drawer opened there lay the memorandum book where I had placed it.

"I hurried through my toilet that I might come down and ask uncle to take me at once to New York to put the memorandum book in the hands of the lawyer we had employed, but your telegram arrived just as the carriage came to the door to take us to the train. You said you would be here this morning, and asked me to stay at Selwood till you came. I did so, and now I hope that all will indeed be well with us."

"There is little doubt of that," said Manvers, clasping her to his heart again. "You have served me as much by your loss of memory as by its sudden return through the agency of a dream, for the book is too important to be risked out of our own hands. Brenton forgot his usual caution, or he would have destroyed the record he thought he had securely concealed. By it I can prove his rascalities, and clear myself from all complicity in them. Arrangements have already been made to have him arrested and extradited as soon as possible. At the last accounts he was on his way to England to visit Emma's friends near London."

"Poor Emma!" sighed Agnes. "It will be an awful blow to her to find that she has married so base a man."

The professor had listened attentively, but had not spoken till now. He suddenly broke in with great excitement:

"She is no better than he is, so do not waste any sympathy on such a woman as Emma. I only hope she will stay among her English friends, and not come back to us to torment my poor Sally again."

At that moment luncheon was announced, and three happier people rarely sat down together than those now assembled around the table. Manvers was the only one who did justice to the dainty meal set before him, for in spite of the varied emotions he had passed through, he had lived so long on bread and water that luxurious food was a necessity to him at this crisis.

Agnes watched him with loving eyes and smiling lips, ministering to his wants and offering him some dainty which she had prepared with her own hands in anticipation of his arrival that morning.

In the afternoon they went to New York and established themselves in Mrs. Meadows's boarding house. The next evening a cable dispatch came announcing that Brenton was in custody and would be brought over on the next steamship, which was expected to leave in two days.

Manvers put his case in the hands of a celebrated criminal lawyer, and everything was soon in train to vindicate him from the charges that had been brought against him, and bring home to Brenton and his accomplice the guilt they had sought to fasten upon another.

Before the week was out, Kirke brought Mrs. Tardy and his betrothed to Selwood; for the old lady decided on joining her husband and Agnes, declaring that Constance must visit the city to provide herself with a suitable trousseau for the fine marriage she was about to make. Constance made no objection, for she was glad of the opportunity to visit her old friend, Mrs. Britt, and prove to her that her kindness was not forgotten amid the new ties she had formed.

Mrs. Tardy's health was quite restored, and the shock of hearing of what had happened to Manvers was broken by learning beforehand that he was safe, and in a fair way to right himself in public estimation.

Her comment on Brenton was:

"I never believed that a man who covered up his face with hair as he does, is safe to deal with. If he had left his mouth to be seen, it would have told the whole story, for lips speak without a tongue sometimes. As to Emma, she'll never ask to come to me again, that is one comfort. I would pity her if I did not know that she and her precious husband are 'birds of the same feather.'"

The days passed on, and there began to be some uneasiness concerning the safety of the steamer on which Brenton was expected. Then came the news of a midnight collision in mid-ocean attended with great loss of life. Among those who went down with the ship was the criminal, and those connected with him thought this a more merciful fate than the one that awaited him on his arrival in his native land. The officer who had him in charge escaped, and a package of papers he had taken from the prisoner was forwarded to Manvers which furnished important evidence as to the investment of the sums Brenton had embezzled. After some delay the money was recovered and paid over to those to whom it belonged. Among these was Constance Deering, who was surprised to find herself the possessor of twelve thousand dollars instead of the two thousand for which she had contended.

John Markley's trial was speedily dispatched after this news of Brenton's death came. He was condemned to twenty years' imprisonment in the penitentiary, and nearly every one thought the judgment an eminently just one. Kit testified against him, and thus escaped punishment.

Emma had not accompanied her husband on his fatal voyage. True to her own selfish instincts, and well aware of his guilt, she refused to share his disgrace. She remained with her early friends, and wrote to her aunt to offer the reversion of Selwood to her on reasonable terms. The offer was readily accepted, and Manvers and Agnes remained with the professor and his wife as the future heirs of the estate. Manvers won both fame and fortune by his invention, and the children of Agnes are a source of constant delight to the old couple.

Kirke and the girl he had so persistently wooed and so completely won, were married immediately after the family was again settled at Selwood, and two people more thoroughly suited to each other could not be found. The love he had waited for so long has never failed him, and he declares that a waiting race is the only way for an ugly man to secure success in his wooing.

Constance thinks him the best and noblest of men, and holds him up to her boys as the only model to be imitated. She has four sons, intelligent and handsome lads; and, young as they are, the two happy mothers, when they meet, often speculate on the probabilities of a future marriage between Julian Kirke and the eldest daughter of Agnes, the beautiful little Constance Manvers, who has inherited her father's personal advantages and her mother's feminine sweetness of nature.

Constance has never given up the accomplishment by which she once earned her bread, and Kirke declares that her paintings are of more value to him than the fine ones brought from Europe by his uncle. More than once he has said to her:

"My bonny wife, it was a lucky chance that brought you to Selwood that day. An angel unawares was entertained beneath that roof, for your quick wit and prompt action saved the family from shame and ruin."

And Constance replies, with love lit eyes:

"I have my reward."

THE END.

—In our next number we shall begin the publication of a new story by CARLOTTA KINGSLEY, entitled—

THE MYSTERY OF TWICHLEY HALL.

This is the history of a tragic occurrence which took place many years since, and was for a long time shrouded in mystery, but was at last accidentally cleared up by the efforts of a vindictive man to destroy one whom he hated, but whom he actually relieved from all suspicion of a terrible crime.

OLD MRS. ROOK'S STRATAGEM.

Fanny Lenton sat stitching at some delicate embroidery in a luxuriously furnished apartment. She was companion to old Mrs. Rook, and had every comfort, kind treatment, and a good salary. But the dull monotony of her daily life was irksome to the girl, who was bright and young and fond of frolic. To embroider Mrs. Rook's collars and kerchiefs; pet the poodle, and take him out to walk; feed the canary-bird, and clean his cage, and dress Mrs. Rook's white hair—these were Fanny Lenton's duties. But she was treated rather like a daughter than one merely hired. She had nothing to complain of.

"I almost wish I had," she sighed. "It would be less tedious to be ill used than to settle down in this way to spend my youth as a sort of genteel ladies' maid and die an old maid at last."

"My grandson, Fanny. Henry, this is my friend and companion, Miss Lenton," said a voice behind her.

And turning she saw her patroness leaning on the arm of a very handsome young man. She arose and bowed. He also bowed low. Very little was said. But afterward, when the young man had strolled away to smoke his cigar on the piazza, Mrs. Rook said:

"My grandson is to live with me henceforth. We need some protection in this rambling old house. I tremble with dread of burglars every night."

So it began. And life that had been so dull grew bright. A new step, a new face, a new voice drove away the monotony. There was music in the parlor in the long evenings. The three went together to places of amusement—friends dropped in. Fanny felt that life was very bright indeed to her, even before Henry Rook actually became her professed lover.

But this happened very soon—a month from the day on which Fanny Lenton bewailed her dull fate over her embroidery in Mrs. Rook's boudoir.

He had said: "I love you;" and she wore his engagement ring. Where Mrs. Rook's eyes had been before, or of what she had been thinking, it is hard to guess; but on the first day when this emblematic jewel sparkled upon Fanny's fore-finger she pounced down upon her like a hawk, and cried out:

"Who gave you that ring, Miss Lenton?"

"Your grandson, Henry Rook," said Fanny.

"So you've been angling for him, eh?" cried Mrs. Rook. "Is this your gratitude? But I'll not bear it; it must come to an end. Take that ring off of your finger, Miss. If Henry marries you I'll disinherit him, and he'll be a pauper."

"I do not want your fortune, Madam," said Fanny. "I regret that you are displeased; but unless Henry gives me up, I will not abandon him."

Away flew the old lady to her grandson.

"Henry," she cried, "you've acted like an idiot. You must break off this affair with a girl who has not a penny. I want you to marry young Miss Diamond, who is a great fortune; and if you disobey me—if you actually stick to your engagement with this girl—I'll send for Lawyer Chatter and alter my will, leave everything to a hospital, and cut you off without a shilling. You hear me?"

"I hear you, Madam," said Henry. "I regret you disapprove of the step I have taken, but you must do with your money as you will. I am not thinking of it, I assure you. I have hands and brains and can earn my own livelihood; unless indeed Fanny declines to share the fate of so poor a man."

"I fancy she will," said Mrs. Rook; "I fancy she will. Advise her to do so. Love in a cottage—what is it Tom Hood says?—love in a cottage really is, leaky roofs and a draught under the door, I believe. No, no, that's not her idea, I'll be bound. And, mind you, I sha'n't relent; I'm adamant!"

Henry Rook at once went in search of his fiancée. He found her in tears, in the little boudoir, where he had first met her.

"Oh, my dear," she said, "have I destroyed your prospects of wealth? I cannot bear the thought. You would reproach me in your heart; let us part."

"Because you fear poverty?" asked Henry.

"With you I would fear nothing," said Fanny. "But it is too great a sacrifice."

"What would wealth be without you, my darling?" cried Henry. "No. Grandmamma has always been good to me, until to-day. I love her, but let her keep her money; let us keep each other."

"You will never repent?" sobbed Fanny.

"Never!" said Henry, and sealed the promise with a kiss.

Together they went to the parlor where old Mrs. Rook sat in state, fanning herself.

"Madam," said Fanny, "Henry refuses to give me up. What can I do. I love him."

"Grandmamma," said Henry, "this is my betrothed wife. Would you have me sell her for a fortune? You yourself told me how fair she was, how good, how sweet. You were right in your description of her. Keep your money, but give us your blessing."

"Ah, very fine!" sneered the old lady. "Well, take my blessing. That is quite a cheap present. Now I shall send for my lawyer. I shall leave my money to the Hospital for Inebriates, or a foundling protectory, or something, or I shall adopt your cousin Peter, sir. As for a companion, I'll never have another. Now, go and be married, and keep house on the blessing. Peter shall marry Miss Diamond. Peter is a plain boy, but he'll obey me, I am sure. You can pack, Miss. So can you, sir!" and she turned her back upon them.

Fanny went up to her room and began to put her few belongings into her trunk.

Henry stuffed his into his portmanteau. In the hall they met.

"I shall go to my aunt's," said Fanny.

"I shall see you this evening," said Henry. "You must set our wedding-day then, my dear, and we'll begin life's battle together."

"Hey?" cried the voice of Mrs. Rook. "You defy me, do you?"

She stood before them shaking her old head.

"I must marry Fanny; we love each other," said Henry.

"He's a beggar, young woman," said Mrs. Rook.

"Then I'll help him beg," said Fanny.

Suddenly Mrs. Rook's face changed. She burst into a laugh.

"Why you silly children!" she cried. "Have I been so good an actress? Do you really think me so mercenary a wretch? I have only been trying you both; and indeed I should have disinherited you, Henry, if you could have broken faith with Fanny for my money's sake. As for Fanny, how did I know she did not want your fortune and not your love, until I tried her? But you have been tested, and have proved to have hearts of pure gold. My home must be yours. My heart you already fill. I have found that there is a little romance left in this world, and I am glad of it."

Then she embraced them both, and her face was as happy as theirs, upon their wedding-day.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1878.

WE always stop the LEDGER at the expiration of the year, or of the time for which it is paid, so that if you wish to continue it, it would be well to renew your subscriptions at least one week before the time expires.

The Great Family Paper.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER
FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1878.

The *Ledger* for the year to come will be conducted on the same principles as it has been heretofore—only, if possible, it will be made still better.

Our rule is to carry no dead weight, but to spread before our readers the newest and the best that money expended without stint will buy.

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ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

The Dangers of Shopping.

It is getting to be somewhat hazardous for the most respectable of women to venture upon shopping in this city, even in what are considered the most respectable of stores. An extraordinary state of facts, bearing out our assertion, was developed by a recent trial in Court.

Two sisters, of irreproachable character, were looking at some articles in one of our most extensive retail dry goods establishments when one of them observed some towels with a peculiar border which she thought would match some that she had at home. Wishing to attract the attention of her sister who had moved off a short distance she turned toward her holding up some of the towels in her hand. To her utter astonishment she was instantly seized by a floor-walker, she and her sister were accused of theft, and in spite of their protestations of innocence the twain were marched through the crowded store and the public streets to a Police Station, where they were detained over night, in separate cells, without food, and in a state of intense anxiety and mental anguish.

We are informed that similar mistaken arrests are not very infrequent at other stores; at all events, this is not the first of its kind that has come to our knowledge: and it is sufficient, in itself, to show how careful women should be in examining anything they wish to purchase when surrounded by suspicious and indiscriminating clerks and watchmen.

The worst of the matter is that on the theory that the acts are unauthorized by the employers, or on some other ground, there is generally a failure to recover any damages at all adequate for such an injury and insult.

If stores should acquire a reputation for unwarranted arrests they will be apt to be avoided, and this really seems to be about the only practicable retribution that can be visited upon them.

Well Enough for the Rulers—Bad for the People.

Now after a signal victory for the Russians it is rumored that the Great Powers will interfere, and that a peace will be patched up between Russia and Turkey.

If we are to have peace between these two countries now, why could not peace have just as well have been preserved before it had ever been broken?

There has been no permanent, substantial gain to either side worth the money and men the war has cost. The wounded, the maimed, the bereaved, the impoverished—who is to compensate them? This war, like most wars, was made for the rulers, to the great injury of the people.

When the world shall have grown more enlightened, and popular rights are better understood and more respected, wars will be of less frequent occurrence, if they do not even become wholly unknown.

Festive Days.

This is the season of joy and festivity. It is well to be lively and hilarious. It is well to make the most of human life. It is well to subscribe for the *Ledger*, and to enjoy reading it, and to follow its sage advice—and to send a copy to a friend. What present would be more highly appreciated throughout the whole year?

This is a suggestion which we throw out for the benefit of whom it may concern.

"If Possible."

[From the Shelburne (Ontario) Free Press.]

NEW YORK LEDGER.—This valuable paper comes to us regularly every week, and, if possible, each issue is superior to its predecessor.

"A HAPPY NEW YEAR, INDEED!"

BY REV. JOHN HALL, D.D., N. Y.

The writer was, many years ago, witness of a most painful scene. In a family well-circumstanced but for its own discord, a connection was taking his leave, and at the door to which he was escorted by the husband, he said, naturally enough, in his leave-taking: "Well, good-by; I wish you a happy New Year." The husband's brow darkened as he turned away. Something had been suggested not only improbable, but painful by its tantalizing suggestion. To utter the hope was only to mock his misery. He muttered, with indescribable bitterness, "A happy New Year, indeed!"

The unhappy man was the husband of a wife abnormally eloquent. Eloquence is a great thing in its place. But employed at the wrong time, in the wrong way and on the wrong side, it is a great evil; and served out in large quantities, under a strong, misdirected temper, and with great frequency, to one person, it may become a great vexation. His was the unhappy condition, known alas! to all his friends and neighbors, of the one auditor. Hence the indignation and bitterness with which he flung off a phrase which only suggested his misery. He did not expect a happy new year. It might be for others: in other circumstances it might have been for him: but as it was—"A happy new year, indeed!"

Not many of our readers, we hope, realize this kind of wretchedness. But without a domestic tormentor one may in other ways forecast a year that shall not be happy. At its beginning, and while such kind wishes are sounding in our ears, it may not be amiss to catalogue some of the preventable ills that wage successful war with happiness.

Are you in Debt? Are you holding out to the world the appearance of competence while mortgaged to another, and in his power? Then you have a kill-joy that rises up and lies down with you; that goes out with you to dinner; that follows you to church; that sits beside you at the concert; that dogs your steps everywhere. This black care sits opposite you in a carriage, and forbids your being free, open, and utterly happy. Why man, you are not wholly your own, but in great part your creditor's. Give yourself up to enjoyment! You cannot; so much of you is under the control of another. Get out of debt as soon as you can, if you would be happy.

Do you drink? It is an old and hackneyed theme, but men can no more be silent about it than about lying, or stealing, or killing, so long as the temptation and the tempted are here. You drink, and any hour may be an idiot, a fool, a madman, a manslayer; at your best estate as a drunkard provoking contempt, in your worst, perhaps doing that in an hour which a lifetime's tears will not wipe out. If you would have a happy year, forswear the stimulant that maddens. You do not drink, Madam? Well, what then? Oh! you take drugs, opium, or morphine, or chloral, and nobody knows of it. Ah! Madam, more know it than you suppose. At least *you* know it, and God knows it. Give it over, if you would have a happy year.

Are you entangled with the bad? Have you guilty secrets? Are there secret pleasures, illicit joys that really compromise you? Are you trusting yourself with the unprincipled because for the present they serve your ends, and swear to be faithful to you? How far can you trust the bad? When it is more their interest to betray than to defend you, why should they not look out for themselves? To what can you appeal in them? Honor? truth? goodness? Why, they may say—You taught us dishonor, lying, badness. We hid things for *your* purposes; we disclose them *for our own.* If you would be happy, keep out of all fraternization with the bad.

Are you sold to ambition? Is it your main aim to get up? Are you sacrificing everything in the present for the coveted rewards of the future? You will not be happy. Your thought will be too much of self. "What do men think of me? How do I appear to them? Am I before or behind my rivals?" Who is happy in this condition? At his ease! No. He is attitudinizing and posturing before his fellowmen, and is haunted with the question, "What do they think of me?" If you want to be happy, give it over. Do your duties as well as you can. If your fellows applaud, well and good. Take the bon-bon. It is sweet enough. But it is not the bread of your life. If you make it so, my poor friend, your heart will one day "perish with hunger."

Are you living beyond your means? One of two things is likely to happen. Your best sensibilities will be deadened; or your apprehensions will grow with growing embarrassments. "I have not been so much out of misery for years as I have been since last Sunday morning," said a strong, and, till then, an honored man. He had been living for years at a rate he could not afford. He had borrowed where he had no right to borrow to cover the deficit, and on that Sunday morning he had disclosed the fact that he had ruined a trusting brother, a fond wife, a young family, and himself irrevocably. But the actual, known, positive misery was more endurable than the secret self-loathing and the vague and terrible apprehension.

Have you no outlook beyond this life? Or are you to drop out of it, and go you know not whither? Are you where Shakespeare paints men, under

> "the dread of something after death.—
> The undiscovered country, from whose bourne
> No traveller returns?"

Does conscience thus make a coward of you? How can you be happy? That power in you to think, and feel, and suffer, and enjoy which death kills not, or if you are not assured of that, which *perhaps* may survive death, why, even if there is a "perhaps" you cannot be happy with no plan, or provision. Hear Shakespeare again:

> "Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once
> And he that might the vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy."

You had better find it out too, and use it, for—

> "The weariest and most loathed worldly life
> That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
> Can lay on nature is a paradise
> To what we fear of death."

Please to notice, reader, that the writer is not preaching. This is Shakespeare, whom all men magnify. Then, if you would have a happy year, get some definite outlook over that awful, unfathomable chasm that separates the Here, in which you are, from the Hereafter, into which you go. Do not rest on guesses or imaginations of your own.

> "O who can hold a fire in his hand
> By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
> Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
> By bare imagination of a feast?
> Or wallow naked in December's snow
> By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?"

Get moral certainties; get peace on stable grounds with your Maker, and with yourself. Thus, patient reader, may you have a happy New Year!

No More Nonsense About Mexico.

A more sensible movement is seldom made in the Congress of the United States than that which has just been set on foot to ascertain whether there exists any real ground for serious difficulty between this country and Mexico.

The Mexican Government is said to be averse to war, and a spirit of fairness and justice on our part is almost certain to prevent the threatened rupture.

Blessed are the peacemakers!

Don't Get Poisoned.

Among holiday presents confectionery is one of the most common. An official investigation has fully established the fact that most of the cheap candies sold are adulterated with deadly or injurious drugs.

Therefore if you are going to make a presant of confectionery, buy it at a house of established reputation. If you give less, give the good; and in no event do anything so ungenerous and unkind as to tempt a person to partake of the cheap and poisonous varieties.

ILLUSIONS.

BY BISHOP CLARK, OF RHODE ISLAND.

These play a very important part in the conduct of life. I use the word *illusion* as signifying something different from delusion. The former may be only a phantom or show, that lifts us onward and upward, while the latter implies our being led astray. To be deluded is to be made to believe a lie, but an illusion may be the shadow or ghost of something real.

The natural world is full of illusions. The apparent rising and setting of the sun,—the gorgeous clouds, that prove to be only a dreary mist when you get caught in them,—the mirage, that reveals things lying below the horizon and shows us ships sailing keel up in the air,—the full moon, which, as it emerges from the horizon, appears to be twice as large as it does when it is over our head, while, if looked at through a tube, or measured by an instrument, it is found to be of precisely the same diameter,—the coming together to a point of two right lines, when seen in perspective,—the mistake of supposing the train in which we are seated to be in motion, when another train at our side begins to start,—the deceptive ideas that we have of distance, as in the instance of a lofty mountain which may seem to be close at hand, when in fact it is scores of miles away,—these are illusions of sight that are familiar to us all. There are other forms of optical illusion which depend upon the principle that motion may be quicker than sight, such as the extraordinary tricks of the juggler, or prestidigitator, which is now the favorite title of the professors of this science,—the continuous circle of fire produced by whirling a lighted stick in the air, and the fantastic movements of painted figures in the popular toy known as the Zootrope. And, again, the most marvelous illusions may be the result of an excited fancy, as when one sees spectres and hobgoblins.

Illusions also exist, though not to the same extent, in the region of sound. Sometimes the midnight wind seems to talk and gibber and groan and sigh; the ocean moans as if it were in pain, and it always seems as though it were the rushing air itself that we hear, when it is only the resistance of the rocks and hills and trees that lie in its way that causes any sound. A man high up in a balloon may be blown along at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, and he will hear nothing. Every body knows what strange illusions may be produced by an echo, and these are sometimes as exquisite as they are strange; and an accomplished ventriloquist may easily make one believe that he hears a man talking down the chimney. By directing the attention to a particular locality we may be made to suppose that a sound originates there, which comes from another region. A friend of mine, in a public entertainment, astonished the audience by occasionally removing the flute upon which he was supposed to be playing, several inches from his lips and without any cessation of the tune—a confederate behind the curtain having in fact furnished all the music, while he merely went through with the motions. An excited imagination has a wide field in the domain of sound, especially at night, when the antics of a mouse, operating under favorable circumstances amid a pile of rustling papers or tin-pans or other reverberating substances, have sometimes led to very serious conclusions.

In the department of touch there is not the same facility for illusions, and yet the hand may sometimes deceive us. With the thermometer 30 below zero the sensation of cold is indistinguishable from that of heat, and at all times a blanket feels much warmer than a slab of marble, although they are both of the same actual temperature. If you cross two of your fingers and roll a marble between their tips it is very difficult to believe that you are not touching two marbles. Just as motion may be quicker than sight, so a bullet or a knife may inflict a serious wound so suddenly that there is no time for the brain to become cognizant of the fact. A gentleman who once jumped from a railroad car while in motion and fell near the wheels told me that when he picked himself up he was congratulating himself upon his escape from injury, when, to his surprise, his left arm dropped out of the sleeve, having been completely severed without any consciousness on his part of sensation. I have myself been hurled from the track by a collision, and afterward dug out of the *debris* of the car that was ground to splinters by the shock, but I have not the slightest recollection even of having been jarred. The thing was over before the nerves had time to carry the intelligence to the brain. It is a comfort to know that those who go out of the world in any such instantaneous way suffer nothing in the transition.

Even in the department of taste and smell there is some room for illusion. I have been told that a smoker cannot tell whether his cigar is lighted or not unless he sees the smoke. One who is ordinarily very fastidious about his food, might be very much puzzled to tell just what he is eating if he were fed in the dark. Many a *bon vivant* has been betrayed into praising a very cheap wine, when it is served in a cob-webbed old bottle, with a pretentious seal. There are fashionable perfumes that would be very repulsive if people knew where they came from. So that every sense is open to illusion, and yet, so far as the external world is concerned, we are obliged to trust them and make the best of their infirmities.

Is there any place for illusion in the domain of *science?* Some will answer indignantly and promptly,—"No. Everything is fixed and certain there." How is it, then, that we have so many different and contradictory theories in almost every department of science,—in astronomy, and geology, and archæology, and biology, and all the other ologies? Are there no illusions in chemistry, yea, even in logic and mathematics, the most rigid of all sciences? One who has not thought much about the matter would say that two straight lines which converge must sooner or later meet, and yet mathematicians tell us the convergence may be so slight that they will never meet. Figures may be combined in such a way as to produce results which are inexplicable by any known laws of arithmetic. And what is there that may not be proved or disproved by the processes of logic? "A Scythian says that all Scythians are liars. If he tells the exact truth, he himself must be a liar, because he is a Scythian; and if *he* tells the truth, *all* Scythians are not liars." Paradox is recognized in science, and a paradox is an illusion.

There is no practical trouble growing out of all this, and it teaches an important lesson, that there is a limit to human knowledge, and also that any one set of our faculties needs to be guarded and qualified by the other endowments which a good Providence has conferred upon us.

If we Live we Must Grow Old.

Some people think that age is the worst thing we have to dread—at least personally. Death may be an entrance into joy such as we have never known; but whose blood does not curdle a little at the thought of old age? And yet, if we live, we must grow old. We all know it, but few realize it. No one can believe that *his* strength must fail, *his* hair grow gray, *his* skin fall into wrinkles. We see these things come to our grandparents—to our parents themselves; and then we suffer. But what young person can look in the mirror and actually fancy what *his* face will be in old age?

To think of being old is terrible to many persons; yet old people often seem very happy. Perhaps a calm we know nothing of comes with age, or it may be that we grow old so gradually the moment of realization never arrives. After all, it is seldom that one gets to be so old that he is not willing to be still older.

Wants a Cook.

The *Rockport* (Indiana) *Gazette* does gratuitous advertising after the following quaint manner:

David Furgason is gathering corn on the Ford Wilkinson farm, near Snyder's Landing. The crop is the best that ever was on the farm. Mr. Furgason is going to cultivate Uncle Ford's farm next year. Furgason lives in Warrick county, and has a fine farm near Lynville, is a widower, and wants a cook.

MINNIE FAY'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Farmer Fay and his comely old wife
Through Christmas-eve twilight were sitting,
His newspaper lay on his lap,
While she counted the rounds of her knitting.
The yule log alight on the hearth
Flared up into flame red and yellow,
Till shadows from ceiling to sill
Turned amber and amethyst mellow.
"Where 's Minnie gone, mother, to-night?
Her empty chair looks kind o' dreary."
"With Benedict's boy, for a walk,"
Her answer came slowly, but clearly.
Then, giving no time for the words
Of bitter complaint that were ready,
This wise woman added: "My dear,
That Benedict boy is *so* steady:
"He 's old as you were when we wed,
And I was our Minnie's age nearly,
When, walking from singing school home,
You told me you loved me right dearly,
How time does go on. Have you thought
About the child's gift for the morning?"
"Well now I forgot. I must go
And buy her some outward adorning:
"I'll buy her a frock, red and blue,
Or maybe a bang-up, new bonnet
Of nice yellow silk, with a plume
Stuck up kind o' sideways upon it."
Farmer Fay couldn't see the old face
Bent laughing now over the knitting,
Nor guess the dismay he had caused
By his recklessly chosen outfitting.
"Well, father;" she laid her work down
And dropped seven stitches; "I 'm thinking,
Of something she loves more than all;
She don't seem to care much for prinking,
Dear dutiful daughter." The fire
Fell low ere they settled the matter,
And up the long walk from the gate
There came a quick girlish foot-patter.

* * * * * * *

When Minnie looked wistfully round
Through light of the glad Christmas morn,
She found neither bonnet or frock
Her fair pretty self to adorn;
But down in the sole of her shoe
A greenback, and this, "If your beau
Will have you, I 'm willin', I s'pose,
And this is to get a tros-sew."

OLD LORD LOVAT.

BY JAMES PARTON.

Of all the objects shown to visitors in the Tower of London the most impressive, perhaps, are the block and axe formerly used for beheading persons convicted of treason. The block is a rough, heavy mass of wood, about two feet high, two feet thick, and three feet long, with an excavation in the upper part to receive the breast of the sufferer, and a corresponding excavation on the other side for the chin. The marks of the axe are still plainly visible on the block, some of them showing by their depth the needless force of the executioner's stroke. The axe is an ancient, awkward instrument, which seemed to me, when I handled it, to be very ill adapted to its purpose. There used to be shown, also, an awful-looking black mask, which the executioner wore when he performed his office, so that he should not be afterward recognized by the spectators.

On this block, or on one like it, perished the queens of Henry VIII., Lady Jane Grey, Sir Thomas More, Algernon Sidney, Lord William Russell, and many other illustrious persons, besides those not illustrious, some of whom were none the worse for the loss of a head. The last who died upon it, and the last person beheaded in Great Britain, was the Scottish Lord Lovat, who laid upon that block, a hundred and thirty years ago, a head hoary with the snows of eighty years. He was beheaded in 1747, and since that time the axe and the block have never been used in England.

For five centuries, as the old man himself said upon the scaffold, his family had belonged to the class of Scottish gentlemen, and he was the twenty-third person of his line who had held the title of Lord Lovat. For ages his ancestors had been chieftains of the clan of the Frazers, living among the mountains in rude state, exercising over their vassals an authority not far from absolute. The abode of the Lovats was a small, plain mansion, roughly furnished, and chiefly adorned with the trophies of the chase. They maintained a sort of court, and were constantly attended by a crowd of bare-legged retainers, for whose entertainment a public table was daily spread. Even down to near the middle of the last century, these retainers, as well as the servants of the house, slept upon straw, which was spread every night on the floors of the lower rooms, the family and distinguished guests retiring to the upper floors. In such style as this, old Lord Lovat was living in 1745, when the son of the Pretender landed in Scotland to make one more attempt for the restoration of the Stuarts.

From the best accounts we have of those times we are obliged to conclude that Lord Lovat was a sad reprobate, by turns a traitor to both the royal families, and having no guiding principle except his own interest. For his betrayal of the Stuarts he had been imprisoned in the Bastile of Paris, and rewarded by the English government with court favor, as well as by more substantial recognition. In 1745, being seventy-eight years of age, of great bulk of body, and unable from the weakness of his knees to walk a step, he could only send his eldest son to join the Pretender, himself remaining at home. The rebel army defeated at Culloden, was scattered never to reassemble, and its adherents had to seek safety in exile or concealment.

But this corpulent lord was unable to stir from his abode without assistance, and the fidelity of his retainers was put to a severe test. They carried him by main strength more than seventy miles over the wildest part of Scotland, to an island in lake Morar, and drew up on its shore the only boat in the vicinity. A huge hollow tree was his abode and hiding-place upon this island. The western extremity of the lake is separated from the ocean only by a narrow piece of land, and across this a boat was drawn by the crew of a man-of-war, and thus a party of men reached the isle. Much astonished were they to see in a hole at the bottom of a large tree two very solid human legs, muffled up in flannel, like those of a man afflicted with the gout. The sailors were not long in discovering that these belonged to the rebel chief of whom they were in search.

Of all the prisoners captured in that rebellion none seems to have excited so much interest and commotion among the people as this fat and helpless old lord, notorious in two rebellions, and of long celebrity for wild adventure and despotic rule over his clan. He was carried to London in a sort of cage, escorted by sixty dragoons, a journey of twenty days, during which he behaved with a curious mixture of merriment and ferocity. On his arrival in London he was kept for a few days at an inn; and during that time it was that he was "interviewed" by the popular artist of the day, Hogarth, who drew and engraved a capital likeness of him. Copies of this picture were in such demand that for a week the press was kept going night and day printing them. For several weeks the enterprising artist, as his biographer relates, received for these portraits "at the rate of twelve pounds a day." On reaching the Tower the old man said:

"If I were not so old and infirm you would find it difficult to keep me here."

They told him they had kept much younger men than he.

"Yes," said he, "but they were inexperienced; they have not broke as many jails as I have."

He was brought to trial after long delay, before the House of Lords. After several days' trial he was pronounced guilty and sentenced to death; upon which he asked the lords to recommend him to the mercy of the king, and then, turning to the manager of the trial, said:

"I hope as ye are stout, ye will be merciful."

Upon leaving the bar he said to the whole court, with much politeness:

"God bless you all. I wish you an everlasting farewell, for we shall never meet again in this place."

After some months' detention in the Tower the order came for his execution. The old man retained his gaiety and his politeness to the last. On the fatal morning he woke at three o'clock, and said his prayers with great devotion. At five, according to his custom, he called for a glass of warm wine and water, after which he spoke cheerfully, took a book and read for an hour or two with perfect composure. He was careful to have his wig properly dressed, and provided himself with a purse with ten guineas in it as a fee to the executioner. At breakfast he ate heartily, and drank to the health of his friends in his usual beverage of wine and water.

At eleven he was summoned to the scaffold, when he requested every one to withdraw while he said a prayer. On his way to the scaffold, every step of which he had to be half-carried, his behavior was in the highest style of old-fashioned courtesy. After getting down the first flight of stairs with much fatigue, the Governor of the Tower invited him to come into his room to rest himself. He entered, bowed to the company very graciously, and conversed with all his accustomed ease.

Proceeding on his way he came at length in view of a few spectators, to whom he bowed. He spoke of his execution precisely as if it concerned another person, and made various requests respecting the disposition of his head and clothes. One request was that his clothes should not be given to the executioner, as was usual, and to compensate him for this loss he said he should give him ten guineas, instead of the customary three guineas. He wished also that his head might be received in a cloth and placed in his coffin, without being held up to the people. As he was being helped up the steps of the scaffold, catching sight of the crowd which covered the roofs, and even the rigging of the ships, as far as the eye could reach, he cried gayly:

"God save us! Why should there be such a bustle about taking off an old gray head that cannot get up three steps without three bodies to support it?"

Observing one of his friends standing by who appeared to be much dejected, he clapped him on the shoulder, saying:

"Cheer up thy heart, man! I am not afraid; why should you be?"

Seated in his chair on the scaffold he called for the executioner, gave him his ten guineas, asked to see the axe, felt the edge, and said:

"I believe it will do."

He then read the inscription on his coffin, which, besides giving his name and title, stated that he was "beheaded April 9th, 1747, in the eightieth year of his age." After this he repeated the famous line from Horace:

"Sweet and becoming is it to die for our native land."

He thanked his servants and attendants, and calling to a member of his family, he said:

"My dear James, I am going to heaven; but you must continue to crawl a little longer in this evil world."

He then took off his hat, wig, and coat, ordered the cap to be put on, loosened his cravat and the collar of his shirt, knelt down at the block, and with his own hands arranged the cloth intended to receive his head. He told the executioner that he would say a short prayer, and then give the signal by dropping his handkerchief. He remained silent and motionless about half a minute, and then throwing his handkerchief on the floor, his head was severed from his body by a single blow. How strange to think that such scenes as these, so barbarous and so absurd, were possible in Great Britain as recently as the year 1747, when George Washington was a boy of fifteen!

"Just Ready to Give Up."

I doubt if there is a living woman out of her teens to whom there has not come that moment of utter weariness and of dissatisfaction with herself, and with every one and everything about her, in which—physically and mentally weary and her very *soul* tired—she has declared herself "just ready to give up," and momentarily abandoning this wicked world and all its sufferings, has flown to that haven of rest, her own room, and there, plunging head-first into the pillows, made her moan.

She has done her best and remains unappreciated. She has made sacrifices without winning a kind thought. She has given her strength and her tenderness, and her meed has been blame. Nobody cares for her. Her own work, whatever it may be, seems so poor, her every effort so futile, she *must be* a failure, or she would never be thought so little of. "His" grandmother's pumpkin-pies *were* better than hers, despite the advantages of two generations of cook-books. Or, if her ambition has taken loftier flights, she cannot write or paint or sing as the great ones can. Why was woman put upon earth? Why was *she* put there, since she has come to wish that her soul could slip quietly out of her body and be at rest?

The pillow is wet with tears. The sunlight, falling aslant through the shutters, kisses a weary brow. There is no desperate trouble to bewail, no grief great enough for a poet to make rhymes about. Again the poor little soul, not caring whether her language is eloquent or not, sobs—"Oh, I *do* feel just ready to give up." Let no one laugh at her. She does feel like giving up the struggle; she expresses herself perfectly.

Oh, don't you know all about it, my dear—the aching heart, the hot head, the tear-scalded eyes? "*He*" went out without kissing you, and the children were troublesome, and Biddy has been impudent, and a friend has been saying things against you, and the gray hairs are coming too early, and a line or two on the forehead. Youth is gone, or going, and love and friendship with it, and you 've been up and down stairs until your feet ache, and you are "ready to give up." You know all about it.

And then, just at your worst, what happens? First a little voice at the door, may be, crying "Mamma," and you say: "There is Baby, any how." And then that cross, impudent Biddy, calmed down, with a cup of tea, and "Plase, ma'am, if you 've a head ache, drink it down. And you know I 've a temper of my own, when the washing is too sore, and won't mind them words I said, if you plase." Well, Biddy *is* a good soul, after all. And then a letter from Fannie: "Oh! my dear—I never, *never* said such a word! I love you more than ever. *Do* say I may come to see you."

And, after all, Fannie is as true as gold. How could you doubt her? And then, as almost comforted, you watch the twilight deepen, "*He*" comes home with a little bouquet of violets and tickets for a concert, and such a sweet kiss, and it 's all right again. "Give up?" Why, no. What an idea! You 'll "keep on" as long as the Lord let 's you. Only, as you smile away your tears, remember the poor women to whom comfort never came, and who really "gave up"—there have been such—and pray for them. M. K. D.

Encouragement.

Whenever you can conscientiously encourage any one, do so. You would not leave those plants in your window-boxes without water, nor refuse to open the shutters that the sunlight might fall upon them; but you leave some human flower to suffer from want of appreciation or the sunlight of encouragement. There are a few hardy souls that can struggle along on stony soil—shrubs that can wait for the dew and the sunbeams—vines that will climb without kindly training; but only a few. Utter the kind word when you can; give the helping praise when you see that it is deserved. The thought that "no one cares and no one knows" will blight many a bud of promise.

Whether it be the young artist at his easel, the young preacher in his pulpit, the workman at his bench, the boy at his mathematical problems, or your little girl at her piano, give what praise you can, for many a one has fallen by the way for the want of that word of encouragement which would have "stablished their feet." M. K. D.

A Singular Marriage Announcement.

[From the Alabama Herald.]

MARRIED.

PATTERSON—FRADAY.—At the bride's residence in Scottsboro, on Sunday evening, 2d December, 1877, by Rev. W. J. Couch, Mr. Henry Patterson, of Stevenson, and Mrs. Jane Fraday.

Though their romance came to a happy termination, since they are both middle-aged, still we hope their wedded life will be none the less blissful. The two persons whose union is above chronicled were engaged to be married when she was but a seventeen year old girl. A lover's quarrel and a separation was next. Then she married somebody else, and he followed suit. After many years of married life, and each with a house full of children, some of whom are married, they being both widowed, renewed their courtship with the above happy result. So "all 's well that ends well."

AT THE THRESHOLD.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

Now, while the lengthening sunset shadows fall
Athwart the golden threshold of the year,
And Nature dons her hodden-gray—and all
The woods are sad and sere;
While Autumn, piping by the reedy rills
His doleful octave of November gales,
Still lingers mid the lone blue-misted hills,
And melancholy dales:

While some divinely sweet Intelligence—
Born of the hour—communes with us apart,
And shapes with higher, holier influence
The longings of the heart:
Let us give thanks to Him whose gracious hand
Hath poured for us the harvest's lavish store,
Till all the mighty garners of the land
Are heap'd and running o'er!

The brimming presses of the vintage spill
The blood of grapes—and from the teeming soil
We gather the rich increase that shall fill
Each wasted cruise with oil;
For—if our weaker brother toiled in vain,
And fickle Fortune shunned his humble door—
Dare we neglect to render of our gain
God's tithes—unto His poor?

Beneath the burden of their lusty shocks
The slopes rejoice—a drowzy tinkle fills
The pastoral silence, where the herds and flocks
Gladden a thousand hills!
And, peaceful augury of the days to come,
Through mellow glooms that wrap the falling night,
Soft shines the joyous beacon-star of home,
The hearth-fire's cheery light!

Let us give thanks! while over holt and mead
Sad Autumn, tracked by shrill November gales,
Goes piping on his melancholy reed
By lonely hills and dales;
Let us give thanks to Him, whose will sublime
Ordains the flower to spring—the leaf to fall:
Whose wisdom rules the seasons in their time—
Whose love is over all!

◆

THE BRIDE'S ORDEAL.

By MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE DESERTED WIFE," "SELF-MADE," "THE HIDDEN HAND," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HAUNTING TERROR.

In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,
And more than echoes talk along the walls.
POPE.

"Yes, mist'ess, it was an awful thing. But don't take on so, my dear young mist'ess. Marster, *he* didn't, even when he fust heerd it. Don't take on so, mist'ess. Here take a drink of water," said the meek little black woman, totally mistaking the cause of Erma's emotion, and believing that the fate of her husband's step-father only occasioned it.

Erma, feeling sure that the housekeeper must have only imperfectly heard her own incautious words, struggled to control her emotion, and accepted the proffered glass of water.

She had scarcely drank it and returned the tumbler, when Rodolph Wolfsohn re-entered the room smiling.

"What! Have you not been relieved of your damp clothing yet, Erma? Araminta! Is there a fire in your mistress's room?"

"Yes, marster."

"Then show her up to it at once—Erma, dear, your trunk has just been sent up," said Rodolph, as he began to divest himself of a light summer overcoat that was dripping wet.

Erma followed the little housekeeper out into the hall and up a broad flight of stairs to an upper hall, where she opened a side door leading into a large front bed-chamber, directly over the room that they had left below and corresponding to it in every particular, having two front and two side windows, and a chimney place in the back wall, flanked by closets in the recesses.

A large bed stood with its head between the front windows and its foot to the fireplace. A dressing-bureau stood between the side windows, and a three-cornered washstand stood in the angle of the wall between the front and back windows. Two easy-chairs and other chairs stood about. Windows, bedstead, sofa and easy-chairs were all draped with white dimity.

There was no carpet on the floor, but a faded Brussels rug laid down before the fire.

Erma's large trunk stood in the middle of the floor.

"Which if you will gib me de keys, mist'ess, I will unpack your close and put 'em away, and hab de big trunk took up in de garret outen your sight," said the little old creature.

"I thank you, Aunt Minty; but—is there no younger woman than you to do that?" inquired Erma, looking pityingly at the little fragile black form.

"La, no, mist'ess, dere's no one 'bout de place to wait on you and marster 'cept 'tis me and poor Sept."

"'Sept?'"

"Him as drove de carriage and fotch up your trunk. Leastways helped marster to fotch it up, 'cause poor Sept never could o' lift it by hisse'f."

"And is Sept your husband?"

"No, mist'ess."

"Your brother, then?"

"No, mist'ess, no kin to me. Only fellow servants all our lives, as our daddies and mammies were long afore us."

"Well then, Aunt Minty, since there is no other younger woman to help me with this unpacking I suppose I must trouble you, although I do not like to do so," said Erma, as she drew off her gloves and laid off her hat and sack and knelt down before the trunk.

She opened it, took out the first tray, which contained folded dresses, and carried it and emptied its contents on the top of the bed, saying:

"There, Aunt Minty, you can hang these dresses up in the closet for me, if you please."

"Yes, mist'ess, wid all de pleasure in life."

While the old negro woman was carefully engaged in this work, Erma returned with the empty tray in her hand to the trunk.

She put it down and took out the lower trays and boxes, all of which she carried to the bed and emptied, and then brought back to the trunk.

When finally she had taken out all the contents except the mysterious box at the sight of which she again shuddered, she carefully replaced all the empty cases, boxes and trays, and securely locked the trunk with her patent key, and strapped it strongly, saying:

"There, Aunt Minty, this is ready to be taken up into the attic, and I am ready to help you put away those things."

"Bery well, mist'ess, me and Sept will take it up into de garret soon as I get done here," replied Minty, as she smoothed out a black silk dress preparatory to hanging it up in the closet.

"And you two old people do all the work of this house?"

"Yes, mist'ess, 'cept when marster helps, and he do help a dreat deal more dan we likes to see, but he will do it."

"And so will I, Aunt Minty. Don't think that I have come here to give you more trouble, poor, dear woman, but to help you as much as I can."

"Laws, mist'ess, if so be you was to gib me double and thribble work I shouldn't think it no trouble. I is so glad, my dear young marster has fotched home a sweet young wife to comfort him. We'll do de best we can, Sept and me will, to sarve bofe of you, mist'ess."

"I am sure you will. This old house, so perfectly clean and orderly, shows what you do. But I will help you henceforth. The burden must not rest entirely upon you, at your age."

"It didn't use to be so, my mist'ess. Dere was plenty ob maid-servants and men-servants, too, in de time ob de ole' Lovels, which was my mist'ess's maiden name, an' de time ob de Wolfsohns, too, which was her fus' husban's name—Marster Rodolph's father's name—but eberyfing turned roun' when she married Mr. Gustave Perlemonte."

At the sound of that ill-omened name Erma shuddered, in spite of all her efforts to command herself.

The little old negro woman, fairly started on her topic, went on, unconscious of Erma's emotion, and innocent of any malice in her narrative of wrongs.

"I had a husband—poor Charley. We was married bery young. He was eighteen an' I fifteen. An' we libbed togedder ten years, an' had seben chillun—five gals, an' two boys—de oldest and de youngest was boys, an' de oders was gals. We nebber expected to be parted 'cept by death; for you see, mist'ess, de Lovels and de Wolfsohns, too, would as soon fink ob selling one ob deir own chillun as one ob deir colored people which had libbed long o' dem, parents to chillun, from generation to generation, you know, mist'ess?"

"Yes, I understand you, Aunt Minty."

"Well, mist'ess, fus' my husband, poor Charley went."

"'Went?' How?"

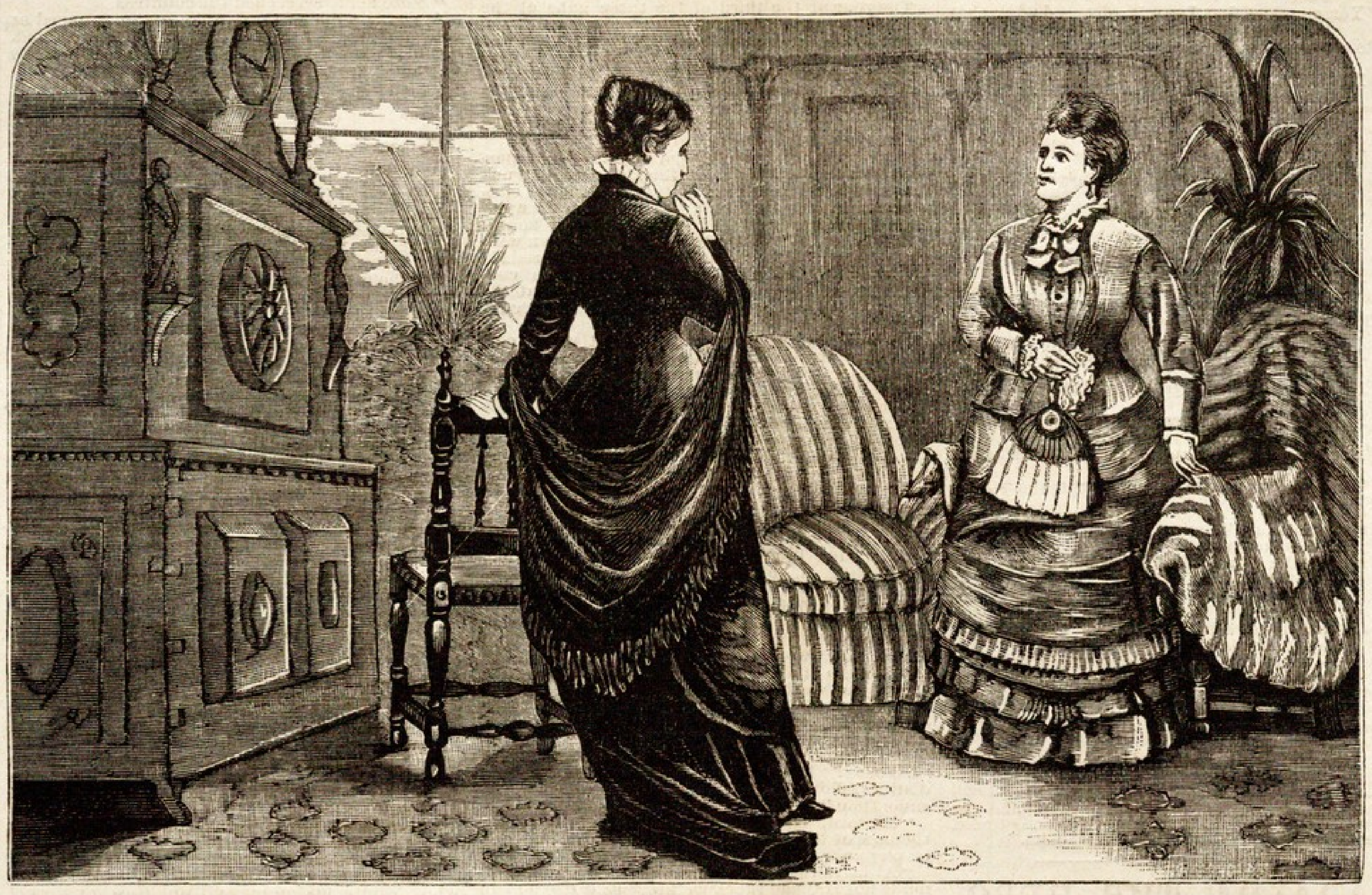
"Soon arter my young mist'ess's second marriage to Mr. Perlemonte. He wanted money, and he sold my poor Charley, which was a fine young man of twenty-eight den, and fetched five hundred dollars. Sold him, mist'ess, way from me and de chillun to a trader, which took him to de Souf, and we nebber heerd noffin ob him."

"Oh, my poor, poor, Minty! Could not your mistress—could not Mrs. Perlemonte have prevented that?"

"No, honey, she couldn't. All pussenal property, 'cludin' her cullered people, becomed hissen arter de marriage, 'cordin' to law. No, honey, she couldn't help ob it. She cried as hard as me and de chillun did; but Mr. Perlemonte he only laughed, and told me to get anodder husband, as Charley would be sure to find anodder wife. But, mist'ess, I nebber forgot Charley, and it was my comfort to know that he had sarved the Lord from his youth up, and if I nebber seed nor heerd from him in dis world I should see him in de next, and dat aint far off now, mist'ess."

"No, every day brings you nearer to the meeting with your Charley," said Erma, tenderly.

"It do, mist'ess, and wid my poor chillun too, for dough me an' Charley is like to get home first, in de course of nature, de chillun will come in time, an' we shall all be united at last in His house, nebber to part no more. No, bless my Lord! Nebber to part no more! Nebber to weep no more!" said old Minty, clasping her slender black fingers together tremulously.



AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

"Where are your children, Aunty?" inquired Erma, in a low, sympathetic tone.

"De Lord knows, mist'ess. De Lord, *He* knows whar dey is. I don't. He has got dem in His keeping. Dat's enough for me. My chillun was took from me, mist'ess, same as my husband was."

"Sold?"

"Yes, mist'ess."

"*All* of your children?"

"Ebery one ob dem, mist'ess; ebery one ob dem, boy an' gal, one after de odder, fast as dey growd up, was sold away from me to s'ply money for Mr. Perlemonte. Firs' Charley, named arter his father, was sold when he was no mor'n seventeen year ole'. I thought my heart would break den, mist'ess, but it didn't! it didn't! My poor mist'ess she took it as hard as I did. It made her ill for a week. My only comfort was still de thought that I had fotch up young Charley to sarve de Lord like his father 'fore him, and if we didn't meet in dis world we would surely meet in de next. And one little hope I had—dat maybe young Charley might meet 'long of his father out yonder, Souf; but when I 'sidered how wide de world was, dat little hope went away."

"Oh, Aunt Minty!" breathed Erma, in a voice full of sympathy.

"Mist'ess, I hadn't done crying after my boy 'fore Mr. Perlemonte up and sold my oldest darter, a pretty gal ob sixteen. Mist'ess, I thought when my husband was sold away from me, nothing ebber could hurt me as bad in this world. And den when my poor boy was sold, I thought my heart *would* break. But, mist'ess, dem two was *men*, and so dey *couldn't* be put upon and ill-treated as bad as a poor weak gal could. And so, when dey sold my little Minty, my lamb—"

Here this poor Rachel broke down and wept convulsively.

Erma went to her and took the bowed head to her own bosom, and wiped the streaming tears from the withered black face.

"Dere, young mist'ess, you's good. Nebber mind, mist'ess. It's all ober now, or soon will be. I aint give way and cried as much as that—no, not since my last boy, little Len, was sold away from me! Well, my good young mist'ess, I needn't tell you all about ebery singly one of dem separate. Nuff to say dey was all sold, one after anodder, soon as dey got to be sixteen or seventeen year old. Hardly got done crying for one afore anodder was took. Husban' and seven chillun! Oh, mist'ess, if any heart could be broke eight times, mine was! If any one could die eight deaths, I did!"

"I can well believe it, my poor Minty."

"If de Lord had took 'em all, mist'ess, I shouldn't 'a grieved so much, 'cause dey was all sarving de Lord, and I'd a knowed as He took 'em to Hisself. But to know dey was sold to slavery among strangers, and not even altogedder, but scattered ober de land! It was bery hard to bear!"

"It was, indeed, my poor Minty! But I see that the Lord has helped you to bear it."

"He has, mist'ess. And I do think He gave me this thought, which has comforted me bery often, dat dough *I* dunno whar my poor husband and chillun is, all scattered apart, *He* do! And dough I can't watch ober dem, nor comfort dem, *He* will! And as He sees us all, and as we are in de hollow of His hand, we is all safe, and not so much parted as we 'pears to be."

"Your belief is as true as it is beautiful, Minty."

"And, mist'ess, dere is anodder thing. I dreams ob 'em so often and so plain! Seems as if I was wid 'em all in my dreams. I sees em *so* plain. I talks wid 'em *so* free!"

"No doubt you do, Minty."

"It was a comfort to me, young mist'ess. But my poor ole mist'ess, she took it all hard as I did, and it told on her worse because she was more delicate dan I was. Laws, young mist'ess, it wa'n't de squanderin' of her money, nor de mortgagin' ob de house and land, nor it wa'n't de drinking and de gamblin' and de riotous livin' what broke poor ole mist'ess's heart and killed her—it wa'n't dat! It was just de deep trouble fotched on her poor colored people as she wasn't able to help. Dat's what fotch my mist'ess's gray hairs down in sorrow to de grave 'fore she was fifty year old. 'Cause, you see, it wasn't only me as suffered, but all de rest ob us. Poor ole Sept had his young wife and darters by his first ole wife 'reft away from him! Ah, how she used to cry! My poor mist'ess! I had seen heaps o' trouble myself, but de day I 'closed my dear ole mist'ess's eyes, I was sort o' happy for her sake! And now, as you has come to comfort poor Master Rodolph, I'll try to be happy and thankful for your sakes, mist'ess."

"And we will try to make you comfortable and contented for the remainder of your life, Aunt Minty."

"And poor Sept, too, mist'ess?"

"Yes, and poor Sept, too."

While they had been talking they had not ceased to work; Erma, folding and putting away linen in the bureau drawers, old Minty smoothing and hanging up dresses in the closet. Erma got through first, and then she changed her black cashmere dress for a white organdie, sprigged with black leaves and trimmed with black ribbons.

Before she had quite finished, the bell rang.

"It is for dinner, honey. Sept, *he* had charge ob putting de dinner on de table."

Erma only stopped to take two tea roses from a bouquet, that some kind hand had placed upon her dressing-table, and put one in the meshes of her black hair and the other in the folds of the black bow on her bosom.

While she was still doing this, a rap was heard at her chamber-door, and the voice of her husband calling out:

"Are you ready, dear Erma? I have come to show you the way to the dining-room."

Erma opened the door and went out to join him.

The old woman called gently after her:

"I'll put away de rest ob de things, as careful as if you was a lookin', mist'ess."

"I am sure you will, Minty," replied Erma, as her husband drew her arm within his own, and conducted her down stairs.

He took her into a large dining-room, back of the parlor into which she had first been introduced, and whose chief recommendation was its pure cleanliness. The uncarpeted floor was as white as pinewood could be made; the unpapered walls as white as lime could render them. Curtains of buff linen shaded the four windows—two at the side, two at the back. Opposite the back windows was the wide fireplace, with a little cheerful blaze of light pinewood, just enough to correct the dampness and to counteract the gloom. Against the partition wall, dividing the dining-room from the passage, was a vast antique side-board of mahogany, whose many drawers, cupboard, and brackets once boasted a wealth of silver, cut glass and Bohemian ware, all of which had been sold under the hammer, when Gustave Perlemonte put up his wife's personal property at auction. The side-board, like the other remaining articles, had been left, because it could not find a purchaser, or, perhaps, it had been bought in, as some other needful articles had been, by Rodolph Wolfsohn himself. The half-dozen cane-bottomed, buff-colored chairs and the round dining-table completed the furniture.

Rodolph Wolfsohn led his wife to the head of the table and took his own seat.

The dinner was an exquisite one, prepared by old Aunt Minty, a trained cook of the Wolfsohn family, assisted by Uncle Septimus, who, like most of his race, possessed a decided talent for the culinary art.

After dinner they went into the front parlor, which was lighted by two long spermaceti candles set in tall brass candlesticks at each end of the mantle-piece, and by a large lamp set on the centre table.

They sat down, opposite each other, between this table and the fire.

Then Rodolph Wolfsohn took up the daguerreotypes one by one to show to his wife and tell her all that was interesting in connection with them.

"This is my dear mother's likeness. It was taken in Washington City soon after her second marriage—during the wedding tour, in fact," he said, as he put the worn morocco case in her hands.

"Yes; I saw this when I first came into the house. What a beautiful woman she was!" said Erma, gazing admiringly on the picture.

"Yes, she was beautiful even at forty-five, when, worn out with grief and illness, she passed away," replied Rodolph, with a sigh.

They looked at the picture, passing it from hand to hand, and talked of the departed mother some time longer, and then Rodolph took up another case, opened it and passed it over to his wife, saying, bitterly:

"*That* was her second husband, my step-father, who wrought all her ruin and mine!"

"Yes—oh! I don't want to look at it, please. I saw it once," she cried, with a shudder.

"How sensitive you are, sweet wife!" he said, as he closed the case and put it on the table.

And then, instead of showing her other daguerreotypes, he glided into speaking further of his step-father, and before Erma could find any way of deprecating the horrible subject he was in the midst of the story of the homicide.

"The man got his deserts at length," he said, noticing that Erma had turned her face to the fire and applied her vinaigrette to her nose, but not connecting the action with his own words.

"It happened in this manner, and about this time last year. He was on a coast steamer bound from Charleston, South Carolina, to New York. It was night and they were nearing New York Bay. Some men were playing cards in the saloon. *He* was seated at a table with an inexperienced young man with whom he had been playing since the lamps were lighted, and whom he soon 'cleaned out,' to use his own frequent expression, and whom he left not only penniless, but despairing and on the verge of suicide; for it transpired the fool had been gambling with money not his own, but entrusted to him by his employers. I am telling you these forerunning events of the tragedy as they came to light on the subsequent trial, Erma."

"Yes," she breathed, in a voice scarcely above her breath, as she kept her face sedulously toward the fire and held the reviving spirits of ammonia to her nose.

"To go on, then. When he had emptied the pockets of the wretched young idiot, he arose from the table, and declaring that it was too hot to remain below, he went on deck.

"A gentleman who had watched his play and detected, or thought he had detected, some unfairness in it, followed him to the deck and came up to him where he was standing in the bows quite alone. There, with as much caution and delicacy as the ugly subject would admit of, he began to talk to the gambler. First, without mentioning any of his own discoveries, he merely said that the weak young man had risked and lost not only his own money, but that of his employer, and that if it were not returned he would not only have lost the money, but would lose character and position as well, if not even his personal liberty by a criminal prosecution. Erma, my dear, you do not listen to me," said Rodolph Wolfsohn, breaking off on observing that his wife's eyes were closed as if she were half asleep: "You do not listen to me."

"Oh, I do! I do!" she moaned.

"It is a painful subject, my dear. I regret now that I entered upon it; but it need not be resumed between us ever after this night."

"No," she breathed.

"The gambler laughed aloud at the absurd proposal to restore his winnings to the ruined loser. He said if the young man had played with money not his own it was *his* look out, and *he* must take the consequences. Then it was that the poor fellow's advocate told the gambler what he had discovered—the tricks and shifts by which the money had been won. The swindler gave him the lie. The gentleman coolly threatened to expose him. The gambler hurled the most opprobrious epithets upon the other. This gentleman then lost his reason and his self-control. He was a tall, muscular and powerful man. He seized his antagonist in the midst of his torrent of blasphemy and obscenity and pitched him headlong into the sea. He sank like a stone. He was drowned before rescue could reach him."

"*Oh-h-h!*" groaned Erma, covering her eyes with her hands as if she wished to shut out the sight imagination had called up.

"There, my dear, I will say no more. I should not have told you of all this. Come now, try to compose yourself. There is the tea-bell. A cup of tea will revive you."

CHAPTER XIV.

A STARTLING RENCOUNTER.

A good woman;
But, when she is enraged, grows furious—
Ay, and quite dangerous—out of all reason,
Her wrath doth so transport her.
BEN JONSON.

She is the infernal Até in female apparel.
SHAKESPEARE.

The day after the wedding was as splendid a day as usually succeeds a summer storm.

The sky was intensely blue, the earth vividly green. Low river, just below the house, was full and high that morning. The roses, the only flowers that could flourish under such neglect as they had suffered, were full of half-blown buds and sparkling with raindrops.

In the house old Septimus was stepping lightly from room to room, opening window-shutters, drawing up blinds, removing brands and ashes from the fireplaces, and replacing them with thick, fragrant pine and cedar boughs, for no fire was needed on this bright and beautiful morning—and placing bouquets of rich, odorous red and white roses on the mantle shelves, stands, and brackets.

Meanwhile, Aunt Minty, in the kitchen, was preparing as good a breakfast as her skill and the materials at hand could furnish.

And sometimes the old dusky friends met and spoke together in whispers of their delight in this fair young bride, their new mistress.

At seven o'clock Mr. Wolfsohn came down stairs, but went immediately out on the grounds and began culling the most beautiful rosebuds for a bouquet. He arranged it and brought it in at the front door just as Erma, in her white morning wrapper and black ribbons, was coming down the stairs.

They met with mutual smiles.

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Erma, taking the bouquet of roses that he held out to her, and putting it lightly to her lips and nose.

Septimus, seeing his master and mistress ready, rang the breakfast-bell, and the young pair went into the breakfast-room.

"Oh, how pleasant," murmured Erma, as they entered.

The windows were all open and the shades were half drawn up, letting in the morning air and light, and revealing the grassy lawn with its clusters of shrubs and rose-bushes, rolling down to the banks of Low River, all sprinkled with the raindrops of the late storm; but now sparkling in the light of the morning sunshine, and beyond the narrow stream, the green, wooded hills and vales undulating out of sight or fading under the horizon.

Inside, the room was decorated with fresh roses, three bouquets on the mantle-piece, three on the sideboard, and one on the dainty breakfast-table.

The table stood in the middle of the room, and was furnished with a rich, old-fashioned service of great value, consisting of waiter, urn, tea and coffee-pots, sugar-bowl, and cream jug, besides the smaller accessories of spoons, forks, and so forth.

"Why—what is the meaning of all this, Septimus? Where did these things come from?" inquired Rodolph Wolfsohn, in great surprise, as he recognized his mother's silver set, with the old family arms engraved upon them—a set that he knew had been sold at a great sacrifice in the auction instituted by the late Gustave Perlemont for the sale of his deceased wife's personal property.

"Yes, sar, which dey was fotch here bery airly dis mornin' by ole Uncle Jugurtha from Brighthome, sar, wid de compliments of his marster, and a note to you, sar, and a messidge to me which I was to put 'em on de breakfas' table," answered the old man, with a bow.

"This is very strange? Where is the note?"

"Layin' unner your plate, sar."

Mr. Wolfsohn found the note.

"It is addressed to you, my dear," he said, as he passed it over to his wife.

She took it, and standing close by his side, read it in a low tone.

It was dated: "Brighthome, May 18," and ran as follows;

"MY DEAR ERMA: If it will give yourself and your husband half as much pleasure to receive your rare old family plate as it gives me to restore it, I shall be delighted. Accept it, my child, with the blessing of an old man and your true friend,
"CLEMENT GLADDEN."

"How like Mr. Gladden!" exclaimed Erma, as tears of gratitude came into her eyes.

"I wondered at his buying that set. Now I know he did it with the intention of restoring it to me on the first opportunity. But ought we to accept this? What do you think, my dear?"

"Oh, yes, Rodolph. What else *could* we do? You—we could never affront him by returning it," she answered, earnestly.

Rodolph Wolfsohn sank into deep thought. He was as grateful as she was; but the thought of accepting such a present hurt his sense of independence.

"We must write a good, appreciative letter of thanks after breakfast, and then watch for some opportunity of showing our sense of his kindness in some more practical manner," said Erma.

"Indeed we must."

"It is his wedding present to *me*, you know, Rodolph, so your pride need take no exception to it, while surely, no present could have been better devised. Your mother's old, long-inherited silver. I am delighted to have it, Rodolph, and I should think you would be."

"I am, dearest. I am. Take your seat, Erma, the breakfast is cooling," he said.

They sat down.

Septimus waited on them.

While they were still lingering over their morning meal, Aunt Minty appeared at the door and beckoned to Septimus.

He went out into the passage, closing the door after him; but soon returned with a note in his hand, which he handed to his master, saying:

"Captain Blantyre's man, Marc Antony, brought it, sir, and is waiting for an answer."

Mr. Wolfsohn took the missive.

It was directed to Mr. and Mrs. Rodolph Wolfsohn, Darkwood.

He opened it, glanced at its contents, and handed it to his wife, saying:

"It is for you to decide, my dear.

The note ran as follows:

"MY DEAR RODOLPH AND ERMA: Will you come and dine with us on next Saturday, *sans ceremonie?* There will be no one but Miss Barbara Gunn and her nieces and ourselves, unless, perhaps, our new governess, whom we expect next week, should arrive sooner. Write by the messenger, and believe me always your friend,
"SUSAN BLANTYRE."

"We will go, Rodolph?"

"Yes, certainly. I do not wish you to live a hermit's life, dear."

"And—already I want to see the children," said Erma, as they arose from the table.

"Especially your wild lover, 'Rooster,'" laughed Rodolph.

"*Most* especially my devoted lover Eustace," replied Erma, in the same spirit.

The note of acceptance was written and dispatched by Captain Blantyre's messenger.

Then a letter of thanks was indited and sent by Septimus to Mr. Clement Gladden.

When this was done, Rodolph Wolfsohn walked out for his morning's inspection of his fields and workmen.

Erma, attended by Aunt Minty, who had now got through her matutinal labors, went all over the old house which was her new home.

The rooms up stairs were, nearly all of them, bare of furniture, except the one appropriated to Erma, and the one opposite across the hall, which old Minty said, as she opened the door, had belonged to her late mistress.

"Dunno what was de reason, honey, but Mr. Perlemonte never 'sturbed dis room, nor likewise sold nuffin out 'n it. I do reckon he was afeard if he did mist'ess's ghost would haunt him."

"I shouldn't wonder," muttered Erma to herself.

"Anyways he left it alone, just as she died into it. And Marster Wolfsohn, he nebber could bear to see de room after seeing his dear mother draw her last breaf on dat bed. So since *she* left it nobody has ebber come into it 'cept me, who has to sweep and dust and air it about once a month to keep it in order."

Erma stood in the middle of the room looking around upon it.

It was certainly the best furnished one in the house. A blue ingrain carpet was on the floor. Blue French chintz of the same light shade draped the tent-bedstead and the four windows and covered the lounge and the two easy-chairs.

Instead of the open wood fireplace there was a polished steel grate, with silver-plated mountings, and there was a fender to match and a marble mantle-piece adorned with blue Sèvres China vases.

Each side the mantle-piece were handsome clothes-presses of mahogany.

Between the front windows stood a handsome chest of drawers, surmounted by a broad mirror.

"Dem presses and chesses is full ob treasures, mist'ess. Satin and welwet and brocade dresses which is so rich and strong as dey'd stand on end, dey would so. And Indjy shawls, mist'ess! And lace shawls! And jewels! And dey is all yourn now, young mist'ess. Ebery singly one ob dem," said Minty.

"Oh—no—no—no! These are all sacred relics! I could not use them, aunty."

"Hi! why not, mist'ess? Dey's made for use, ain't dey? She what use to wear dem is gone to glory and clothed in a garment of light, and don't 'quire dese poor rags no more. Dey's poor rags 'paired to *her* hebbenly raiment, if dey is rich satins and welwet and Indjies. And which is best should have 'em, mis-t'ess, you or de moths? 'Cause if you don't, dey will, dat's sartin."

"It would seem to be a profanation for me to wear them, Minty."

"No, my young mist'ess. 'Cause why? My dear old mist'ess say to me, on her death, she say: 'I have no sister and no daughter, Minty; so you must save all my best things for my son's wife if he should ever marry, as I hope he will.' And so I has took good care ob 'em. I was mortal 'fraid Mr. Perlemonte would sell 'em 'mong de other things, but I reckon, bad as he was, he would a been ashame' to put his dead wife's *close* up to auction before all de county gentry. 'Sides which he was 'fraid to come inside of dis yere door."

They soon after left the rooms and looked into several others, which were all bare of furniture, though clean and sweet as rooms could be.

Next they went up into the attic, which was also clean and airy, and contained nothing but a few old trunks, among which was Erma's large Saratoga, with its "skeleton" locked securely within.

"Does any one often come up here?" inquired Erma, with a shudder.

"Only me once in a while to sweep and scrub to keep things sweet, you kno', mist'ess. 'Cause if I didn't in a ole house like dis de cobwebs and spiders and dust would 'cumulate so nobody could lib into it."

"You are a careful housekeeper, aunty," said Erma, as she turned to leave the attic.

"Which it is my bounden duty to be, mist'ess," answered Minty.

In the lower hall they met Mr. Wolfsohn, in the old broad-brimmed black felt hat that Erma had always thought so becoming to his picturesque dark beauty.

"Put on your things, dear Erma, and come with me for a walk. The dampness has dried off the ground and we have just time to stroll down by the river before dinner," he said.

Erma ran up stairs for her hat and light mantle.

Minty went into the kitchen to look after the dinner that she had put on the fire some hours earlier in the day.

Rodolph waited in the front hall for his wife, who presently joined him.

They walked through the shaded lawn down to Low River, a narrow stream, as I said, whose deep banks were thickly grown with eglantines, dog-roses and other creeping and trailing vegetation.

A narrow path ran along the top of the bank, and this they took, turning to the left.

Over the river was a still, undulating country of hill and vale, woods and fields—the hills usually clothed with woods, the vales with waving fields of wheat and rye.

Before them, to the left, far down on the other side of the river, arose the red brick chimneys of a farm-house hidden in a group of trees.

Rodolph pointed it out to his companion, saying:

"There is the place called 'The Marsh,' where your pupils stayed while the fever was at Brighthome. The Marsh is the property and residence of my old relative, Barbara Gunn, as perhaps you know."

"Oh, yes."

"She is an honest and honorable woman, but with a fearful temper, and a terrible predilection for strong and very objectionable language. If you were to meet her accidentally, my dear, you would mistake her for an old warrior in woman's clothes. However, you will meet her at Blantyre, if she does not call to see us in the meantime," Mr. Wolfsohn explained.

"Of course I shall be very glad to know her, Rodolph," answered Erma.

They strolled on and continued to talk, though their further conversation it is not necessary to repeat.

Soon the heat of the noontide sun warned them to return to the house.

They reached home in good time to rest and change their dress for dinner.

Saturday, the day appointed for their visit to the Blantyres, dawned clear and fine.

They were to go early and spend the whole day, for that was the well understood custom of the time and neighborhood.

Immediately after breakfast on that morning, Rodolph Wolfsohn walked out as usual to see to his fields and workmen, saying, as he left the house, that he would be back in an hour.

Erma went up to her room to dress for the little dinner-party.

She put on a rich black silk dress from which she had ripped off the crape trimmings, supplying their place with guipure lace. She wore white crêpe ruffles around her throat and wrists, and a white silk bow on her bosom. Her jewels were the pearl earrings and brooch from the set given her by the family at Brighthome. A black and white silk hat, with a gray grenadine vail and white kid-gloves completed her toilet. A white Berlin wool carriage wrap was thrown over her arm to be worn, in case the evening should be chilly for their ride home.

She was quite ready when Rodolph Wolfsohn returned.

"How lovely you look, dear Erma," he whispered, as he ran up stairs to change his own working clothes for the only evening suit he had—his wedding-dress.

He did not keep her waiting long, but soon came down again, ready for their ride.

He put her into the carriage, on the box of which old Septimus, in his best suit, sat, holding the reins. He took his seat at her side and the horses started.

The road between Darkwood and Blantyre House was like all the other roads in this hilly and wooded country—through the forest, always up hill and down dale.

It was nearly twelve o'clock when they reached Blantyre.

Blantyre House was a handsome building of white stone, surrounded by out-houses of the same material, all rising from a thick grove of forest trees, in a well-kept park that lay in the midst of a green valley enclosed on all sides by wooded hills.

A white stone wall enclosed the park. An iron gate, hospitably open, admitted the carriage. A wide gravelled drive, between rows of acacia trees in full bloom, took them to the oblong front of the white house, with its double row of windows, and its upper and lower piazzas.

Old Septimus drew up the horses.

Mr. Wolfsohn alighted and handed out his wife.

Captain Blantyre, who was standing on the steps of the front piazza, came down and cordially greeted the young pair.

"Is Miss Barbara Gunn here?" inquired Rodolph, as soon as he had returned the salutations.

"No—"

"Is she coming?"

"No, I am sorry to say. She sent an excuse—rheumatism."

"I wonder if it *is* rheumatism or caprice?"

"Heaven knows! She is a queer one, our formidable neighbor."

"Are any of her nieces to be here?"

"No. It is not likely, without herself to chaperone them. Her nieces were included in the excuse sent."

While they talked they had been standing on the piazza, with the hall door wide open to receive them, and a man-servant standing within it to attend them.

Old Septimus had already driven off his carriage toward the stables.

"Oh, by the way, Wolfsohn, my dear fellow, I want you to take a look at something—a lady's horse that I think of buying for my wife. Susan is very fond of riding, you know, and I want her to have a safe horse. This one is here on trial. I wish to have *your* opinion of him before I decide whether to purchase or not. You are a much better judge of horseflesh than an old salt like me. Will you come now?"

"With pleasure," said Rodolph.

"Will you excuse us, Mrs. Wolfsohn?"

"Certainly," replied Erma.

"You will find Mrs. Blantyre quite anxiously expecting you. Marc Antony! Here! Show this lady into the drawing-room and let your mistress know that she has come!" said Captain Blantyre, as, with a bow to Erma, he led the way to the stables, followed by Rodolph Wolfsohn.

Erma crossed the threshold of Blantyre House, preceded by the servant, who opened a door on the right, and held it open for the lady to pass.

She entered a long, lofty double drawing-room, with a bay window at each end, and two white marble chimney-pieces surmounted by broad mirrors on the side opposite the hall. The room was elegantly upholstered in blue and white.

At first Erma supposed the place to be untenanted, and she walked toward an inviting easy-chair near the front bay window to seat herself, when, to her surprise, a stout, fair-haired, showy-looking woman, handsomely dressed in white organdie and lace, arose to meet her.

For a moment the two stared at each other in blank amazement.

"Good Heaven! Mrs. Somers!" exclaimed the young bride, turning pale as death.

"Why! is it *you*?" cried the stout woman, still staring. "*You!*—Erma Her——"

"*Hush!* For Heaven's sake, hush! I am married. I am the wife of Rodolph Wolfsohn! Oh, for pity's sake, don't denounce me!"

And she sank at the feet of the woman and lifted her clasped hands in prayer.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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MANNERS CONTAGIOUS.—It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught as men take diseases, one of another; therefore let men take heed of their company.

TABLEAUX FROM MY WINDOW.

BY MRS. EMILY THORNTON.

Once, watching from my window, when the sun sank in the west,
A tableau rich, of beauty rare, before my vision rose,
The Catskills loomed far off, with sunshine on each crest,
While "The Old Man of the Mountain"* lay stretched in deep repose.
Above the burnished hills I saw a cloud, dark, broad and wide,
Edged all around with border bright, of deepest, purest gold;
And as I looked, the sinking sun lit up the mountain side,
While lo! a misty, golden vail before the dark cloud rolled.

"How beautiful!" I cried aloud. "A lesson here I see.
Yon cloud, as first I saw it, pictured trials that we meet;
Its centre dark, the heavy woes that fall so suddenly,
Its gilded edge, the stab of friends that cut while smiling sweet,
The rays of sunshine falling like a vail of purest gold,
Bright'ning, yet not obscuring, while shining thus above,
Is Faith's bright mantle, God's own gift, that we around us fold,
Giving each cross a golden tint, each frown a smile of Love."

I watched this magic picture with unalloyed delight,
Until the gold, the cloud, the sun, all faded from my view,
Then a change crept o'er the scene. Phantom Twilight stepped in sight,
And a thin but misty vesture around the sky he threw.
Then from his dusky girdle he drew forth, one by one,
Bright, sparkling stars of beauty, and fastened here and there;
The Pleiades in group he placed, then belted Orion,
While Cassiopeia he gave a bright and starry chair.

"How beautiful!" again I cried. "And see, the moon comes now!"
Above the Berkshire hills she peered, then crept across the sky,
Throwing pale beams of light around, on grass, and tree, and bough,
Casting long shadows on the ground from lovers strolling by.
Sweet scene! This change from sunset bright to twilight's dusky gray,
Portrays the change from youth to age. The moon, and stars, and light
Speak of the Great Beyond, the long eternal Day,
Immortal youth, and stars, and crowns, and rapture and delight.

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*On a certain ridge of the Catskill Mountains the figure of an old man reposing may be distinctly traced. This is called "The Old Man of the Mountain."

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HARALDA THE HERO;

OR,

The Bride of Barcelona.

A Romance of Spain in the Fifteenth Century.

By PROF. WM. HENRY PECK.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE BARGE OF BALBAC.

The schemes of Balbac had not designed the capture of Lady Mazeenta until she and all the noble friends of Count Scorda should be out of their various barges and upon the bridal platform in fancied security. His own position as guest would enable him to be within striking distance of the would-be bridegroom ere the ceremony of marriage was begun. His men, more than two hundred strong, were to suddenly break through the cordon of the guards which he expected would be placed in the empty barges around the platform, and charge furiously upon the male guests, most of whom were very slightly armed, and none of whom would expect any attack. In the confusion, Balbac intended to stab Count Scorda and follow Lady Mazeenta to the boat to which she was to rush with all speed at his command. All his boats had been selected for their capacity to be urged swiftly through the water, and he had no doubt that all could make their escape seaward until they would be under the shelter of the guns of one of his warships which, in the character of a Spanish trader, had been cruising off the Catalonian coast for several days.

The sail which we have said was seen by Juan Galloz from his lofty perch was that expected thereabouts by Balbac.

Each of Balbac's boats was provided with a mast and sail, which could be speedily placed in proper position and used were a friendly breeze to spring up, and each was a swift sailer. His men were all expert oarsmen, and he had no fear that any of his boats, even were there no breeze to permit the use of sails, could be overtaken by any boat in Barcelona. Silently and secretly, and with great skill, he and his faithful agents had prepared his plans for his intended rescue of Lady Mazeenta.

The unexpected rush of boats upon and over the buoy-lines, and in between the barges of which the marine and bridal procession was composed—a rush created by the premature discharge of the culverin—caused Balbac to believe that by a sudden approach upon the bridal barge, and a signal to Lady Mazeenta, she would be able to spring from her barge to his ere she should arrive at the bridal platform. And once in his barge her rescue from the power of Count Scorda would be almost fully secured; for a messenger had arrived from his ship in the offing on the previous day, and he had no fear of being captured by the boats of Barcelona in any pursuit that might be made.

The chance was well worth seizing, and therefore Balbac ordered Ahmed Ali to lift his foliage-crested lance and move it as a signal for all boats of the renegade to turn their bows toward the bridal barge.

Though less than ten minutes elapsed between the discharge of the culverin and that of the cannon of the captured fortress, a scene of great confusion had grown up in the vicinity of the bridal barge during that time, and all along the space recently kept clear between the buoy-lines; as the eagerness of all to be near the bridal platform created furious strife of tongues and oars, and often of sharper weapons.

It was at this scene of confusion that Volta was gazing when the three guns of the fortress were heard, and he was struck headlong into the water by Salza, who had been told by Captain Eskosos when to strike.

Volta was not even stunned by the blow that hurled him forward over the edge of the platform, and caused him to take a very deep and very involuntary dive into the water. He did not know who or what had felled him, and as his head reappeared above the surface he struck out lustily toward his barge, "The Boat of Death," which was being lashed to the edge of the platform when he tumbled over so suddenly.

But he had not made two strokes when he saw that his barge would not be a safe refuge just then, for Salza, armed with a huge and long-handled sword, the "Sword of the Deathsman" in fact, was in the barge, striking furious blows right and left, and shouting in a tremendous voice:

"Death to Scorda! Death to all the Scordas!"

"The Sword of the Deathsman," as the above weapon was called in Barcelona, was one whose blade was fully five feet long, with a hilt for two hands, and was never used save by the executioner when a criminal was to be beheaded, though it always appeared when Volta had any kind of public punishment upon his hands. Its long and broad blade was brightly burnished, and it had just been placed in position, point downward, upon the platform when Salza dealt the blow of his fist that hurled Volta into the water. Ere the falling executioner's body struck the water, Salza bounded upon the man whose office it was to see the sword properly placed near the edge of the platform, struck that man down with another blow of the fist, and seized the huge hilt of the enormous weapon.

Then shouting: "Death to Scorda!" Salza sprang into the barge and began to slash the double-edged blade up and down, and right and left.

The oarsmen and prison officials in the barge fancied that Salza was the victim of some sudden and terrible frenzy; but his attack was so swift and unexpected that three of their number were killed or disabled before the others began to make any stand against their formidable assailant. Nor had any got in more than a blow of an oar or the thrust of a pike at Salza ere all saw that crowds of men, and apparently more women, all well armed, were springing upon the execution-platform from the large raft of which we have spoken.

These, the Greek sailors of Captain Eskosos, shouted as they rushed from the raft, brandishing their swords:

"Rescue for Haralda the Greek! Haralda! Haralda! Eskosos! Rescue! Rescue! Haralda the Greek!"

On perceiving this charge the men in the executioner's boat no longer thought of trying to overcome Salza, but only of saving themselves; and uttering various cries of terror and surprise, they began to leap from the barge into the water, just as Volta's head re-appeared from his involuntary dive.

Meanwhile Eskosos and his companion were busy about Lord Haralda—one freeing him from the gag, and the other from his bonds, and both speaking words of joy and good cheer to him.

And at the same time all who were in the conspiracy of the people against the Scorda faction, and upon the water, raised the Torreda war-cry after the example of their leaders, and began to attack the various barges of the bridal marine procession—using darts, stones, javelins and arrows which had been well concealed in their boats.

The roar of the third of the three guns of the fortress was also the signal for attack upon the Scorda faction on shore, and the Inez and Scorda guards and all the soldiery of the Scordas on land found themselves unexpectedly and furiously assailed by well-organized bands, numbering at least two thousand men. These were members of the secret and popular order called "The Darts."

Count Scorda's eye chanced to be resting upon Volta at the very moment the latter was struck down by Salza, but his attention was turned elsewhere instantly by the simultaneous attack upon the bridal barges by hundreds of other boats; and the cries of "Death to Scorda!" "Down with the tyrants!" "Torreda forever!" "Torreda!" "Torreda!" told him that a formidable conspiracy had exploded beneath his power at the very moment when he fancied that it was secure beyond all attack.

Balbac's barge was very near that which carried Lady Mazeenta when he comprehended that a regularly planned insurrection or revolution had broken forth on every side of him, on land and on water. To prevent any attack upon his barge—toward which several boats were being urged by men who breathed only hate for all the friends of Count Scorda—he bade all in his barge to raise the popular cry, "Torreda forever!" while he flashed his keen glances in every direction, seeking to find the face of Count Torreda, who, he had no doubt, would not be absent in such an outbreak.

But Count Torreda was on shore at that time, marshaling his forces to aid those who were assailing the Scorda faction in *The Rambla* and near the quay of that avenue.

"So," thought Balbac, amazed at an outbreak of whose plotting he had had no tidings, and which now swept upon his knowledge with the suddenness of a hurricane, "so Alfonso has been secretly at work and formed a conspiracy which has surprised Scorda, and which promises to be successful. He should be in some of these boats leading this attack. What is it they shout on the other platform? Ah—'Haralda the Greek!' and 'Eskosos!' Here is a double conspiracy, or two distinct plots have chanced to explode at the same time."

"My lord," called out Ahmed Ali in Arabic from the bow of the barge, "Haralda the Greek must be on yonder platform."

"At least they have discovered that the criminal is not Haybad the Apostate," said Haybad in the same tongue.

"We must take care not to become enmeshed amid these plots and outbreaks of which we know nothing," thought Balbac; and rising from his seat he called out in Arabic to Lady Mazeenta:

"My daughter, in a moment my barge will be near enough to yours to permit you to leap from yours to mine! Be ready!"

But at this moment the command of Count Scorda caused several of his barges to glide between the bridal barge and that of Balbac; for the count, as brave as he was wicked, and as experienced in naval warfare as any warrior there, was now in his own barge, giving quick and wise orders and rapidly forming his available strength for offence as well as defence. And it was wonderful to behold with what ease and speed so renowned and able a warrior gathered his barges into groups and lines of action, in spite of the apparently overwhelming odds against him.

Countess Inez now showed her Amazon nature and skill in battle; for in an incredibly short time her barge, well manned and armed as it was, had crushed or put to flight half a score of the boats of the people; and armed with a bow and quiver which she had snatched from one of her archers, she let fly arrow after arrow, with unerring aim, at every man who appeared to be a leader among the attacking boats.

"That for you, Sancho Valvoz!" she exclaimed at one time, as she let fly one of her arrows. "I know you have ever aspired to be a great man among the rabble of Barcelona!" And the chief of one of the attacking boats sprang suddenly into the air and fell into the water with the arrow through his heart.

"And this for you!" she screamed again, as she hurled a javelin at a man who was taking aim at her with a dart; and ere the dart left the man's hand the javelin of the countess, hurled with lightning-like quickness, was three feet through his throat, and he, falling backward among his comrades, was dead in a few moments.

Count Scorda no longer thought of marriage. He had detected, by a single glance shoreward after the outbreak began on the water, that unless he and his nobles should be soon in the city, his soldiers on land might be beaten back from all the quays, and his enemies take those and other places of advantage.

A glance at the platform of execution, and the shouts of the disguised Greeks told him that Lord Haralda was about to be rescued; and the war cries of the leaders of the insurgent people told him that the Torreda factionists and, perhaps, his formidable foe, Alfonso del Torreda, in person, were at war against him.

Therefore, his commands compacted or deployed his barges as he rallied, encouraged, and hurried all into groups and lines best calculated for speedy escape from water to land.

Balbac, veteran warrior of hundreds of sea-fights, both in ships and boats, saw that the measures so rapidly taken by Count Scorda would greatly imperil if not wholly destroy his plan to rescue Lady Mazeenta; and he called out to her to spring from boat to boat till she should reach his own, as no less than five barges were at that moment side by side between his and hers, the one nearest to hers being that of Countess Inez.

It was an easy leap at that moment from the bridal barge to that of the countess; and Lady Mazeenta first tore off much of her bridal dress that would have been a fatal impediment to all rapid movement of limb, and then made the leap with the lightness of a bird.

"Seize her, Dama Boveda!" cried Countess Inez, who was in the bow of her barge as Lady Mazeenta lighted in its stern. "Seize her! Hold her!"

The countess screamed these commands from sheer malice and spite—ready to do anything to crush any wish that Lady Mazeenta might have—for Countess Inez had no suspicion that friends of the maiden were near; nor had the ears of the vindictive woman caught more than the sound of Balbac's voice as he shouted his words in Arabic.

Dama Boveda, who had no heart to be a target for the many missiles hurled at all the barges by the people, was crouching on the floor of the barge at its stern when Lady Mazeenta's feet almost struck upon the dame's head as the maiden leaped into the barge.

Yet the dame obeyed the countess instantly, and merely from force of habit; and no sooner did she have her muscular arms around Lady Mazeenta than she congratulated herself that she had now a kind of shield which would to some degree protect her from the missiles of the people.

"Dama Boveda," whispered Lady Mazeenta to her captor, "I will save your life if you will free me."

"Oh—you are very cunning! How?" asked the dame.

"You are poisoned."

"Poisoned! I?" exclaimed the dame.

"Yes. You drank the wine poured out by Countess Inez."

"Then she is poisoned too. She drank of the same wine."

"But she drank water from the other flagon immediately afterward—"

"Oh, so she did!"

"And Signor Caretta told me in Moorish that the wine was poisoned. That was what he was saying."

"Oh—I remember; but you drank—"

"Water—which was also poisoned. And the lozenges I gave you were an antidote to the poisoned wine. Eat them and be saved."

"Oh!" shrieked the dame, and in her dismay freeing Lady Mazeenta from her circling arms. "Oh! I threw them away! I did not like the taste! Oh! I feel very sick!"

And as the dame uttered the last word, Lady Mazeenta sprang from the barge into the one nearest to her.

"Catch her!" screamed the countess. "Keep her there!"

One in the barge into which Lady Mazeenta had first leaped tried to obey the command of the countess, but as he stretched out his arms to grasp the maiden she dealt him a stroke on his throat as quick as lightning.

Her hand was armed with that dagger of which we have spoken, and the man's arms flew up, his hands grasped his throat, and with a cry of dismay and pain he staggered and sank down bleeding.

And as he thus staggered, Lady Mazeenta made her third bound and landed upon the low gunwale of another barge.

"This will catch you!" screeched Countess Inez, and as the words were on her lips she hurled a javelin at the shoulders of the maiden, who was at that moment poising her lovely and agile form for another leap.

The weapon grazed the maiden's neck, and whizzing on over the boat in which she was, and over the one beyond her, and even over that of Balbac—all being in a line—pierced the thigh of an oarsman in a barge beyond.

This javelin, hurled with all the fury of the countess, was still in the air when Lady Mazeenta made her fourth leap.

This leap carried her into the bow of the fourth of the five barges that were, at first, between Balbac's barge and her own.

"Seize her!" screeched the countess.

A young noble of the Scorda faction grasped at the maiden. Her dagger flashed and he recoiled. She made her fifth leap, and sank into the arms of Balbac the Saracen—his captive again.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

VOLTA SWIMS.

No sooner was Lady Mazeenta in the arms of her supposed father than he released her and bade her get beneath the small canopy that covered a part of the stern of the barge. Behind this canopy there was just room for the steersman of the barge to stand erect and guide its course with an oar, the top of the canopy being about on a level with his waist.

This helmsman was the real Haybad the Apostate, tall, powerful, intelligent and brave as any renegade there.

Lady Mazeenta was beneath the canopy in a moment, and scarcely there when a javelin clashed against its latticed sides. The javelin was from the vindictive hand of Countess Inez, and had not the stanchions and lattice work of the canopy been of iron the well-aimed and powerfully-thrown weapon would certainly have pierced through and wounded, if it had not slain, the maiden. But the careful foresight of Balbac had provided what he intended should be a secure place and shelter for her in the pursuit which he had expected would be made by Count Scorda's friends—a pursuit in which Balbac knew the count's partisans would little regard the presence of a woman.

The javelin of the enraged countess clashed vainly against the iron lattice and fell back into the water.

"Accursed she-fiend!" exclaimed Balbac, as he snatched up a javelin from a mass of weapons hitherto concealed on the floor of his barge. The next instant saw his tall figure erect, his right arm raised, his eyes no longer hidden behind peaceful-looking spectacles, but flashing with all the fierce fire of hate and desire to kill, and then the javelin was hurled.

The plumed helmet of the Amazonian countess was torn and beaten from her head by the force and aim of Balbac's javelin, and she fell as if brained on the spot.

"You've slain the she-wolf of Barcelona, my lord!" cried Haybad, as he saw her fall.

"I hope so—though never before has my hand wounded, much less slain a woman," said Balbac, who, despite his many evil qualities and cruel deeds, had been very scrupulous in his treatment of women. "Give the signal for our boats to disentangle from this battle as soon as they can and make for the open sea, Ahmed."

Ahmed Ali lifted and tossed the foliage-banner in some peculiar way, and as each helmsman of Balbac's barges saw the well-understood signal, the bow of each boat was turned seaward, and its occupants used every effort to quit the scene of strife.

Meanwhile Volta, terrified by the struggle in his own boat, and amazed by everything that he heard and saw, had swum away from the coffin-shaped platform, and directed his course toward the bridal platform, which was not far from that of the iron chair.

He was an expert swimmer and perfectly at home in the water, so that his long and frog-like strokes of arm and leg carried him rapidly through the water.

Yet ere he reached the bridal platform, it too was boarded from its seaward side by scores of armed men, who sprang upon it from many boats in which for hours they had awaited the signal of the three guns. And all these men shouted either "Death to Scorda!" or "Torreda forever!"

"Come," thought Volta, as he again changed his course, "it is plain that it was indeed the Count of Torreda who beat me senseless with a single blow this morning! He is in Barcelona and with a vengeance! So much the better for me and my trade—if I do not get knocked on the head ere I reach the shore!—so much the better for me, whether Scorda or Torreda wins the day. I shall have plenty of heads to cut off, necks to stretch, bones to break and lashes to inflict. I shall thrive! This broil will give me work. The public executioner is always regarded as a neutral in these outbreaks—provided he has sense to keep hidden till all fighting is over. But he is in danger during fighting, if he be seen. Fortunately, only my head can be seen as I swim, and that is a small object amid a scene like this."

Other heads than Volta's were at that time just above water, and they were owned by those of his boat's crew who had leaped into the waves to escape from Salza and the Greeks. Two of these heads belonged to Jacob and Esau, the sons of Volta—for though deaf and dumb they had quickly recognized the peril of remaining in "The Boat of Death."

The mutes were also expert swimmers, and were soon in the wake of their father. They had great faith in his wisdom, and so followed him. They made some peculiar noise as Volta changed his course from toward the bridal platform; and he, glancing over his shoulder at them, saw that they were near each other and not two fathoms from him.

"Good!" thought the Deathsman, whose ferocious heart was capable of containing a certain kind of affection for his offspring. "My lads have escaped Salza's attack. Now why did Salza attack my bargeman and his fellow-assistants? I am sure now that it was that sullen-browed rascal Salza that knocked me overboard. May he survive this day, so that I may have the scourging and hanging of him. The scoundrel! He actually dared to smite my men with 'The Sword of Death!' Ah!"

Here a stone struck Volta on the side of his head and made him howl with pain. He had been seen and recognized by a man in one of the boats. The man was armed with a sling, and was master of that weapon.

"Ho! There is Volta," said this man to his comrades. "Volta who laughed at my writhing while he scourged and branded me last year. This for him."

And the very first stone he threw rapped violently on the hard skull of the Deathsman, and would have crashed a hole in it as large as an egg, but for the cap of wool and steel that was still on Volta's head.

"Ho! And are not the two near him his sons, Jacob and Esau, the rascals who capered with delight when they aided their abominable father to hang my brother, year before last," cried a comrade of the slinger, armed with a bow. "Yes!" And he let fly an arrow that gashed the brow of Jacob as it narrowly missed piercing his temple.

"Pull nearer! Pull nearer!" shouted the slinger to his comrades. "Let the Deathsman and his cubs be our game first of all! Pull nearer! Give way! Death to Volta and his whelps!"

Volta and his sons saw that they had been selected by the boat of the slinger to be drowned or beaten to death in the water.

"If we scatter we shall be slain in rapid succession," thought Volta, who had already recognized the slinger and the archer as men who each had a personal feud with him and his sons.

"We are three in the water, and they are six in the boat. Two to one in number. A hundred to one in vantage. If we scatter, we shall certainly be lost. If we hold together in defence, we may escape."

He signified his thoughts to his sons in a moment. His great right hand rose high above the water, and his long and nimble fingers quivered, danced and fluttered in the air, while the eyes of his sons were fixed upon them keenly.

A stone from the slinger splashed water into Volta's face. An arrow from the archer shred off a piece of Jacob's ear. Esau's eyes flashed with rage, and he uttered a horrible yell, and shook a short, thick and broad-bladed belt-knife at the approaching boat. The boat was rushing toward Volta and his two sons under the skill and strength of four strong men. The slinger stood in the bow and the archer in the stern of this boat. They and their four comrades thought they were about to pelt Volta and his sons to death, as boys pelt and kill frogs—only that Volta and his sons would not have half the chance of the frogs to get away.

Volta and his sons swam slowly now, side by side; and they swam as if desirous to meet rather than avoid the boat. Every time a stone quit the sling, or an arrow the bow, Volta and his sons dived and so escaped the missiles. This was no difficult matter for these active fellows so long as the boat was more than twenty fathoms away; but as it approached nearer the danger of being struck increased.

"We are lost if more than one boat singles us out," thought Volta; and the same thought was in the minds of his sons.

But no other boat observed the Deathsman and his sons, as the grand and general naval attack was upon the barges of the nobles.

As the boat of the slinger drew nearer and nearer, Volta and his sons separated a little, but still swam abreast. Two of the four oarsmen quitted their oars and sprang up with javelins in their hands. Each hurled a javelin when near enough to the swimmers to take good aim. The three heads vanished and escaped the javelins; but as the three heads reappeared an arrow pierced the shoulder of Jacob, and a stone struck the forehead of Esau. Volta was unhurt. The two mutes uttered no cry of pain, nor were they much hurt.

Suddenly all three heads disappeared, and in thirty seconds the slinger said to his comrades:

"They have sunk to the bottom. They are dead."

"Oh, blazes!" roared one of the oarsmen the next instant; for a short, thick, broad and strong blade had darted through the thin boards which formed the bottom of the boat, and through a foot of the oarsman.

At the same instant two other blades, exactly like the first, darted through the bottom of the boat. And again and again, with not a second of time between the thrusts, were such strokes made upward and through the bottom of the boat by Volta and his sons, who were beneath it.

Through nearly a score of holes water now spouted upward from the bottom of the boat, and two men were wounded in the feet and writhing with pain; yet in little more than a full minute from the moment when the three heads vanished the three reappeared in different directions from the boat, but not far from it.

They remained visible only long enough for each to fill and empty his lungs a few times, and then, unharmed by the missiles hurled at them by those in the boat, they again vanished.

"To the oars!" shouted the archer, who now appreciated the peril of the boat. "Pull! Pull!"

But as the oars swept through the water the three sharp and strong blades were again at work; and in less than thirty seconds fully a score more of holes were added to the others; and at least forty spouts, small but swift and strong, were then shooting upward through the bottom of the boat, or through its thin sides below the water line.

The boat began to fill.

The attack was repeated; and this time Volta's dagger found by chance so rotten a portion of the boat's bottom that by a sudden exertion and twisting and thrusting, his whole hand went through, and as he drew it back he let go his dagger and grasped the broken edge of the hole he had just made.

With a jerk, though nearly dead for want of breath, he tore off a strip of the bottom as long as his arm and as wide as his hand. Then the water gushed upward like a torrent, and the boat began to sink rapidly.

The slinger, archer and four oarsmen sprang overboard, terrified to utter dismay by the sight of Volta's hand appearing through the bottom of their boat like the claw of some enormous sea-spider.

"They are not mortal men, but sea-devils!" cried the slinger, as he plunged into the water.

"They breathe under water like fish," thought the archer, as he followed his comrade's example.

These two and the oarsmen swam away from the sinking boat as fast as they could.

Suddenly the three heads appeared immediately in the wake of the six swimming men. Jacob had resolved to drown the archer, for his wounded shoulder and ear smarted and bled. Esau had determined to strangle or kill the slinger in some manner, for his head ached from the blow of the stone. Volta, not so near the six as his sons, swam after the latter to try to give them a signal not to molest the swimmers but to try to reach the shore somewhere unobserved. (The reader will please remember that all that we have here narrated concerning Volta and his sons took place in less than fifteen minutes.)

The six swimmers soon scattered, each having selected a boat in which he recognized a friend; and the slinger was followed by Esau and the archer by Jacob, neither being aware that he was pursued by a mute but vindictive foe.

The slinger and the archer were as agile as eels and swam with the ease of frogs; but the sons of Volta were more like pikes or sharks than men in water, so that while Volta failed to overtake his sons in their swift swimming they each overtook his intended prey, and each seized his man.

On land either could have mastered his adversary in a moment. In water it was different. Drowning men, or men trying to escape from death in water, are very dangerous to handle. The slinger and the archer fought hard to keep their heads above water as they struggled in the powerful hands of the mutes.

They struggled in vain, and died, and sank; but as they sank their death embrace, inexorable as bands of steel, was around the legs of the mutes, and ere Volta could reach the spot where he saw Jacob's head vanish beneath the water forever, the head of Esau was dragged down to the slimy depths of the port, and held there in the death-grasp of the corpse of the archer—food for crabs and fish.

Volta groaned as he read the despair of coming death in the vanishing face of Jacob. He groaned again as his glance looked in vain for Esau.

"They were good lads," said Volta to himself, swimming slowly to and fro. "They saved me the hire of at least four men."

Many men were in the water in various parts of the port by this time. The struggle as it progressed between boats and barges had hurled many from each into the waves, or compelled them to leap overboard. A few nobles, and many of the common people and some of the guards were now in the water—some swimming, some struggling to climb into boats or barges, some calling to their friends for help, some cursing, and some fighting even in the water.

A barge swept past Volta almost with the speed of wind, its powerful oarsmen working rapidly and perfectly together. This barge passed so near to the swimming Deathsman that he ducked his head to dodge the blade of one of the oars.

"Ho! It is the barge of Signor Caretta!" thought Volta, recognizing the barge, and also the tall and still gowned form of the pretended Florentine as the latter stood erect.

The barge, nearly clear from the strife, was headed for the open sea a minute after it had swept past the Deathsman, but was still in the waters of the port when Ahmed Ali, in the bow, called out to Balbac, who stood near the canopy that hid and protected Lady Mazeenta:

"There rises the battle flag of one who would pursue us did he suspect our presence and purpose. It is never lifted unless its chief in person is near it."

Ahmed Ali was pointing toward a well-manned boat near the coffin shaped platform, in which a sailor had just lifted on a long lance the battle-flag of Haralda the Greek.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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A REMINISCENCE OF GIRARD.

Those men who have carved out for themselves great fortunes have, as a rule, been men of public spirit and great hearts, not grasping at money merely for the sake of sordid possession, but working for the increase of their store as the judicious mill-owner looks to his dams and safety-banks which are to gather and hold in store the waters that must give power to run his machinery. When you hear of the littleness or penuriousness of such men, be sure the story comes from some importunate beggar, whose business it was to bore and inflict. In this country of ours the one curse attending the possession of wealth—and a bitter curse it must be to a true-hearted, sensitive man,—is the swarming in of the pestiferous leeches, whose wants are as manifold and hollow as their pleas are impudent and brazen. Our men of wealth in America are, as a class, liberal; they give in their own way, and at their own pleasure, and be sure they give generously, their left hand very often knowing not what the right hand doeth.

In conversation with an old Philadelphia merchant, not long since, he told me of the interest which he took, when a young man, in the improvement of the Schuylkill River for navigation. His father was one of the river Navigation Company, and had to do with the work. After proceeding until it was demonstrated that the undertaking, if carried out, would be a blessing to the whole region round about, as well as to the city of Philadelphia, the managers made a careful estimate of the further cost, as there were to be more dams and locks than had been at first apprehended. They wanted two hundred thousand dollars more, and opened their books for subscriptions. This was somewhere about 1820 or '21.

Stephen Girard was waited upon, and told the messengers that he would see them at their office when the gentlemen interested were all present. It happened on the evening of the following day, Girard heard the various reports, and then took the book and put down his name for one hundred shares of the stock.

"There, gentlemen," he said; "now I propose that we finish the business here, and now. Make up what you can among yourselves, and I will do the rest."

They did what they could, and fifty-six thousand dollars remained, for which Mr. Girard drew his check then and there.

It was like the man, and it may be depended upon as the narration of a simple fact. S. C., JR.

TOO LATE.

BY MARY E. LAMBERT.

Slow comes the tardy fall, I thoughtful said,
'Tis time to make my flowers their window bed.
My tiny parterre still is bright with bloom,
And every breeze bears to me rich perfume.

All through the spring I watched those flowerets rare,
Watered and tended them with earnest care;
I sheltered them from summer's tropic heat,
And was repaid with odors rare and sweet.

One beauteous day, a friend more wise than I,
Glanced at my blossoms with admiring eye.
"Take in your hot-house plants to-day," she said,
"One night of chill, and they will all be dead."

But I, unheeding, went my thoughtless way,
Sure that the morrow would be like to-day;
The morning dawned, alas! ere I awoke,
A blasting storm o'er earth in fury broke,

Lasted the day; then, as the night came warm,
I thought my flowerets safe once more from harm;
And so I said, another day I'll wait.
Frost came that night and only breathed "too late!"

A human life I liken to a flower;
Cherished and loved in spring's and summer's hour,
But in Life's fall too often has to wait
For thoughtful care, that comes, alas, too late!

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FOUND GUILTY;

OR, THE

Marquis's Vindication.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LAND-BAILIFF.

Alex had no further opportunity for a private interview with Lady Vivian. The girl slept little upon that unhappy night after her meeting with her father. Anxiety for him, and grief at Lady Vivian's displeasure, made her restless and wakeful. The tears she shed, hot and bitter, might well quench the light of her young eyes, and leave her white and spiritless, with a despairing expression infinitely touching to witness.

Felicie came in at an early hour of the morning, before Lady Vivian had arisen, to assist Alex to dress. Such had been the Frenchwoman's custom since the girl's arrival at Clyffebourne. The tiring-woman commented upon Miss Strange's pallor, and exclaimed:

"There must be something wrong in the air. My lady had one of her bad nights, such as she used to have so often. She fell asleep only an hour ago, and she will not waken for hours to come, but will lie white and still, worn out with exhaustion. I had hoped that these so bad nights were over for my lady forever."

Alex made no response, but the dull pain at her heart deepened into torture.

"My lady said that you would breakfast in your own room, Mademoiselle," continued Felicie, brushing out the silken lengths of tawny hair. "She bade me tell you last evening that she wished you a pleasant visit at Mount Heron, and begged you to excuse her seeing you this morning, as she took leave of you last night. And she bade me say also, Mademoiselle, that she hoped to receive a letter from you."

Alex bowed gravely; she could not speak. She read in Lady Vivian's message and refusal again to see her the sign of her ladyship's continued and severe displeasure.

"You are fortunate, Mademoiselle," remarked Felicie, "to win my lady's love as you have done. I never knew her to take so great a liking for any one before, never. I know it is hard for her to let you go to Mount Heron on this visit, but you will return before we go up to London, or to our home."

"I hope so," said Alex, sighing. "But Lady Vivian may not long want a companion, since she is to be married."

"True, Mademoiselle. She is to be married before Christmas; Pierre Renard told me last night, and it is now November."

"So soon?" cried Alex, in a startled voice.

"So Pierre Renard says. My lady keeps her own counsel still. She has not told me," declared Felicie, somewhat jealously. "I think the marriage will come later. How can she procure a suitable trousseau in such brief time? But Pierre says my lord told him, and it is likely to be true. If my lady marries she may still keep you with her, Mademoiselle, since she likes you so well."

"I could not stay if she were to marry again," interrupted Alex, hastily.

"If my lady marries," said Felicie, "I shall marry too, Mademoiselle. I have been loved by Pierre Renard these twenty years, since he was valet to the late marquis, the murdered lord. I did not like him once, he was too gay, too much of a spendthrift, but he has fallen heir to a fortune, and will buy a chateau in France, and set up as a gentleman. He is very rich, and only stays with my lord marquis until his lordship's marriage, through affection. I shall have servants, Mademoiselle, and a carriage, and be waited upon. Yet I cannot bear the idea of leaving my lady."

"Is Pierre really rich?" asked Alex, her thoughts turning upon the mystery of the Mount Heron tragedy. "Perhaps his fortune will not suffice for all these extravagances you mention."

"I thought of that myself, Mademoiselle, and demanded to see his bank-book. He brought it to me last evening. He has really much money, as he proved to me, and he has much more in France, for which I had to take his word. It is odd that the old uncle should have made so much money," added Felicie, reflectively. "I knew the family well, on both the father's and the mother's side, and I never heard of this rich uncle of the mother. But the money is a fact one cannot doubt. And the end of it all is that I have promised to marry him when madame marries my lord."

Felicie assisted further at Alex's toilet, and the young girl thanked her for her services and kindness, bestowing upon her a liberal gratuity, which Felicie promptly declined.

"Keep it," said Alex, "and buy with it something as a present from me, Felicie. I may never return to Clyffebourne. One cannot read the future."

Felicie accepted the gold piece, and took her leave, after wishing Alex unlimited happiness and prosperity.

A servant presently appeared with Alex's breakfast. She drank her coffee and trifled with a roll, but was too excited and troubled to have any appetite.

Felicie did not return. No further message came from Lady Vivian. Lady Markham dropped in for a few moments to triumph over her fallen rival, but Alex was too proud to show her sorrow or humiliation to her enemy.

It was nearly noon when the Mount Heron carriage arrived at Clyffebourne. Alex descended at once and took her place in it, and was driven away from the house in which she had known so much of joy and drank so deeply of sorrow.

Her boxes had been sent to Mount Heron an hour or two earlier, by order of Lady Vivian, given the night before. Alex leaned back upon the carriage-cushions, and as the carriage turned into the shaded avenue, with a sudden, yearning impulse she looked out of the rear window and up at the Lady Vivian's room.

The curtains of that upper window were held back by a white hand, and Alex had a glimpse of Lady Vivian's superb face, half hidden among the draperies, looking out upon her. The girl caught her breath in a quick sob.

"The rose of success is guarded by a thousand thorns," she thought. "And every thorn seems to pierce to my very heart!"

The day was pleasant. The sun was shining; a brisk, bracing wind swept in from the Atlantic; the sea was in a glorious mood. Sails dotted the restless waters in the distance. The Bluff road, a marine parade in the season and at a later hour, was now deserted. During her drive, Alex had time to recover her calmness and nerve herself for the work before her.

She was going to Mount Heron in the firm conviction that Pierre Renard was the murderer of her uncle, and with the determination to fasten the guilt upon him, with the help of that Providence which never sleeps, and which, sooner or later, avenges the innocent and punishes the guilty. She had no definite plans; her course she left to circumstances and the inspiration of the moment.

The parade and the pier-head at Mount Heron village were deserted. The pretty marine villas facing the sea were, many of them, closed. Most of the visitors had left the breezy little watering-place, and the band no longer played; the donkeys were not to be seen upon the sands; and a look of soberness replaced the recent air of festivity.

A flag was flying from the topmost tower of Mount Heron Castle which, perched upon its dizzy height, looked like some feudal stronghold. The avenue of approach led through the park by a steep and winding ascent, and as it neared the summit, proceeded after a zig-zag fashion, similar to the old Roman road leading up and down the mountain sides between Sestra Levante and Spezia, in Italy, but of course upon a smaller scale.

The park was left behind, and the bold bluff, with its balustrated terraces, rising like tables one above another, and covered with vegetation which grew thriftily in the soil that had been brought hither with infinite labor and expense, was at last gained. The wind blew here in a gale. The roar of the sea was like the sound of muffled artillery as it surged and raged against the rocks below. The view was grand and imposing, appearing almost unlimited. Alex drew a long breath of delight and enjoyment.

The carriage drew up in the porte-cochére, and a footman opened the door. Alex ascended the broad marble steps, and the doors of her ancestral home flew open to admit her. She entered the grand old baronial hall, hung with trophies of war and chase, and the hall-porter was about to guide her to the drawing-room, when Mrs. Ingestre, fat and unwieldly, but all eagerness and satisfaction, came forth to receive her.

The fact that Alex was a favorite of Lady Vivian was a passport to Mrs. Ingestre's favor. The patronage of the duke's daughter was like the "hall-mark" upon silver—it stamped its recipient as valuable and of sterling worth.

Mrs. Ingestre had been "blue" all the morning. She was lonely, and, after an hour's perusal of her favorite medical work, had discovered in herself the most alarming symptoms of a new and fatal malady. Her decease appeared to her imminent. She had, in short, a most severe attack of hypochondria, and hailed in Alex a confidant of her physical distresses, a nurse, and a sympathizing companion, all in one.

"You dear girl!" she exclaimed, embracing her visitor with warmth. "How good of you to come to me so promptly. You find me quite ill this morning, Miss Strange, scarcely able to keep my head off my pillow. Only my indomitable will enables me to be up. If it were not for my invincible courage I should long before this have been in my lonely grave."

Alex expressed her sorrow at this state of affairs. Mrs. Ingestre's looks belied her professions. Her full-moon face was red as poppies; her pendulous cheeks, her thick red lips, her rotund figure, might well have served as the model for health in its vulgarest and coarsest form.

"I will show you up to your room myself," said Mrs. Ingestre, hospitably. "It is a great exertion for me to mount the stairs, but I insist upon doing so. Don't try to dissuade me, my dear Miss Strange. I intend to make Mount Heron so delightful to you that nothing can tempt you to return to Clyffebourne."

She led the way up the broad staircase, along the great upper hall, to a spacious room that overlooked the sea. Bed and bath-rooms adjoined this sitting-room, which was luxurious in the extreme.

An immense bay window overhung the waters. In its great recess were writing and work-tables, easy-chairs, and ottomans. Mrs. Ingestre drew aside the curtains of lace and satin, and let in the broad sunlight.

"I have been alone all day," she said, complainingly. "The gentlemen went out yesterday in the yacht and have not yet come in. But the vessel is in sight and making for harbor. They will be in, in the course of an hour or two, with this wind. They will be surprised to see you at dinner, Miss Strange. Neither Lord Mountheron nor Lord Kingscourt knew that you were to be here at present."

"Will the marquis be pleased?" asked Alex, a little uneasy.

"Oh, he does not concern himself greatly about me. He expressed his willingness to allow me a companion, and I haven't spoken of the matter to him since. He doesn't like to be troubled about small matters, Miss Strange, and household details, and I intend to make the most of my brief reign here. I suppose that Lady Vivian will soon take my place as mistress of the castle."

Alex removed her hat and wrappings. Her boxes were in her dressing-room, but her toilet required no change.

"Let me take you down to the morning-room," said Mrs. Ingestre. "You will have just as fine a view of the sea, and we shall be quite alone for some time to come."

They descended to the morning-room, a large, long apartment directly under the room assigned to Alex.

Mrs. Ingestre politely inquired after Lady Vivian, whom she regarded with awe and admiration, after Lady Markham and certain of the guests, and then branched forth into a harrowing description of her ills, predicting for herself a speedy demise.

The yacht's return to the harbor was not so soon as Mrs. Ingestre had predicted. The vessel tacked first upon one course, and then upon another, for several hours. The two ladies lunched together, and then returned to their post of survey. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the yacht entered her harbor and came to anchor in the shelter of the break-water.

The gentlemen ascended the bluff by means of a steep, long flight of steps cut in the solid rock. Lord Kingscourt passed on to his own rooms. Lord Mountheron entered the morning-room, in quest of his sister-in-law.

He was soft and delicate as ever, gentle and melancholy, with a sweetness of demeanor and a refinement of manner that well became him. He was dressed in a yachting suit, an inspiration of Poole. A shadow swept over his mild face as he beheld Alex, but he greeted her with marked courtesy.

"Miss Strange will spend a fortnight with me, Rowland," said Mrs. Ingestre, "even if I do not succeed in keeping her with me altogether. Dear Lady Vivian will not require a companion after her marriage, and I rely upon you to use your influence toward helping me keep Miss Strange."

"I will use my influence in your behalf, you may be sure," replied the marquis easily. "Have you shown Miss Strange about the castle, Augusta? The terraces, the conservatories, hot-houses, the picture gallery, the ancient chapel and the ruins?"

"Not yet. You forget the state of my health. But I will send some one to show her all the various objects of interest, if I am unable to guide her. You know, of course, my dear," said Mrs. Ingestre, addressing Alex, "that Mount Heron is a great show-place, that tourists come from far and near to visit it, and that pictures have been made of the castle and the ruins? You have a great enjoyment before you, if you are romantic like most young people. The ruins are kept in good order, and are said to be haunted!"

"By the ghost of some former lord of Mountheron," said the marquis. "The servants will not visit the ruins after nightfall, and tell alarming stories of spectral lights and ghostly apparitions which some belated person has chanced to see."

"There are many traditions connected with Mount Heron," said Mrs. Ingestre. "There have been terrible deeds done within these hoary walls—"

The marquis moved away, with a remark uttered in tones too low for Alex to hear.

"Rowland is so sensitive," said Mrs. Ingestre, as his lordship passed out of the room. "He don't like any allusion to the tragedies connected with the castle: he don't believe in ghosts. And that reminds me, my dear. I must beg you never to allude before him to the great Mountheron tragedy. He was deeply attached to his distant kinsman, the late marquis, and he cannot bear any allusion to his tragic fate. It reminds him, I suppose, that he came into the title and estate through the awful murder of one kinsman by another."

"I shall be careful not to allude to the tragedy."

"Lord Mountheron is peculiarly constituted," continued Mrs. Ingestre. "I have known him since he was a young lad; I was the wife of his elder brother. He had always the gentlest, softest, sweetest nature. He would never have harmed a fly. He shrank from any kind of violence as from a plague. You can imagine the shock which that murder brought to a nature constituted like his. He cannot bear any kind of suffering. The sight of a beggar distresses him. The sight of poverty and sickness are to him like physical pain. He gives generously to public charities, but no beggar is allowed to enter the grounds of Mount Heron, lest the marquis should see him and be distressed."

"Would it not be better to relieve such cases than to refuse them admittance?"

"The marquis will not be reminded of the existence of cases of distress, and no one in his service would dare to tell him. With all his sweetness and gentleness he is master, and his people know it."

Mrs. Ingestre was fond of hearing herself talk, and having started upon a new subject dilated upon it at great length during the next hour or two. Then glancing at the clock she broke off abruptly, exclaiming:

"We dine at seven, Miss Strange, and it is after six. How the time has flown. I find your conversation so entrancing as to quite lose sight of the time. We must dress for dinner. Lord Mountheron is as punctual as the clock, and abhors unpunctuality. We will go upstairs. My room is near your own."

They passed out into the hall together.

"That is the drawing-room," said Mrs. Ingestre, indicating its position. "But you know that; I forgot that you were here to dinner two or three weeks ago. That is the library. It adjoins the morning-room, and is a grand apartment. At the end of the hall branches off another hall at right angles, and off that corridor open the state dining-room, family dining-room, and a host of other rooms. The room beyond the morning-room, off this hall, is the marquis's own private room. Beyond that is—"

She paused as the door of the marquis's private room opened and an old man, with gray hair and beard, stooping figure and care-worn countenance, came forth with a dejected air.

"Mr. Orrin, the land-bailiff," whispered Mrs. Ingestre, watching him as he departed. "He is as unpopular among the tenantry as the marquis is popular. He has been in the family a life-time, and used to be well liked during the late marquis's life-time, but he has developed the most grasping disposition; grinds the tenants to the last farthing of possible rent, and is hated by them all. They complain of him to Lord Mountheron, but he refuses to discharge Mr. Orrin, since the man has been in the family so long, and is devoted to its interests. But all the marquis's appeals and commands have no effect upon the land-bailiff. He has turned out poor widows; he has driven one poor man to suicide through his oppressions, and has caused a great deal of misery. No wonder the people hate him!"

Alex could not reconcile this description with the kindly, sorrowful, dejected face of the old land-bailiff. He looked shrewd and keen-witted, but not at all the man to delight in the sufferings of his fellows.

"I have seen the land-bailiff," she thought, "and he, too, seems incapable of that crime of murder. He may have had a motive for destroying his master, but surely he could not have acted upon it. I believe that he, like Puffet, the butler, is innocent of participation in that tragedy. The question of who committed that crime is narrowing down!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RUINED CHAPEL.

When the young Earl of Kingscourt entered the drawing-room of Mount Heron at seven o'clock, in evening costume, he was as amazed as delighted to find Alex there with Mrs. Ingestre. The girl was dressed in white muslin, and looked radiantly lovely, her tawny hair adorned with pink roses, which also bloomed upon her breast and sleeves amid puffs of airy lace.

The earl had scarcely opportunity to exchange a few sentences with his betrothed when the marquis came in. Lord Mountheron was unusually silent. Alex had an impression that he was not pleased with her presence at the castle, but this fear he presently dissipated by his kindness toward her.

Lord Kingscourt took Alex into dinner, the marquis giving his arm to his portly sister-in-law. The gentlemen gave an entertaining account of their excursion, and, after dinner, returned to the drawing-room with the ladies. Alex was asked to play and sing, and complied with the request. After the music, coffee was served, and a visit to the conservatory was made. The evening passed pleasantly. There was no one to wound Alex with severe or averted looks. Mrs. Ingestre accepted her as the friend of Lady Vivian Clyffe, and was attentive to her until sleep overcame the poor lady, and she dozed in her chair.

The marquis went away to his own room, and the lovers were left to themselves. The earl improved the opportunity thus afforded him of urging his claims upon Alex for a speedy marriage. He told her that he had not received an answer from her father to the letter he had sent him entreating consent to the marriage, but he believed that Mr. Strange would respond favorably to his wishes.

The evening was all too short for the lovers. At half-past ten Mrs. Ingestre awakened, and as it was her bed-time, carried Alex away with her.

As they passed along the hall, they encountered Pierre Renard approaching the door of his master's room. The valet paused as if transfixed, at beholding Miss Strange. He stared after her as she ascended the stair, and looked perplexed and anxious. The resemblance which he had marked in her sapphire eyes and tawny bronze hair to the fugitive and condemned Lord Stratford Heron struck him anew and with greater force than upon the occasion of her previous visit to the castle.

"She looks enough like the Herons of Mount Heron to be a daughter of the house!" he muttered. "Who is she? It is time I knew. I should have heard before this. If the little Lady Constance Heron had lived, she would probably have looked like this young lady. But the child is dead and buried. There can be no doubt about that—and yet I wait for news with impatience."

In spite of the occurrences of the day, her interview with her lover, and her view of two of the men whom she had deemed possibly guilty of the crime of which her father had been found guilty, and for which he had been condemned to die; in spite of terrors and anxieties Alex dropped asleep almost as soon as she touched her pillow. The sleeplessness of the previous night had left her too tired for wakefulness to-night.

The next morning, after breakfast, Mrs. Ingestre requested the young earl to show Miss Strange the ruins adjoining the castle, the ancient chapel, and other objects of interest, as she felt really unable to serve as guide, having one of her attacks of headache.

It need scarcely be said that Lord Kingscourt complied with the request with alacrity.

The ruins at Mount Heron consisted of a portion of the castle, centuries older than what now remained in preservation, and which had yielded to the tooth of time. The pointed, slit-like window-openings, the massive walls and battlements overhung with ivy, the great square tower, comprised a picturesque whole, too strong and too ancient and historical to be torn down, and yet no longer fit for occupancy. Here were rooms with stone floors, long corridors, and a hall where the retainers of the Mountherons had been wont to gather in feudal times, five hundred strong. The ruined chapel was attached to this portion of the vast castle, and Lord Kingscourt led Alex down the dim aisles to the high altar, a most imposing specimen of ancient carving.

"During some one of the wars, hundreds of years ago," said the young earl, "when the Mountherons were on the losing side, a marquis of Mountheron was under ban, and a price was set upon his head. A troop of soldiers came to arrest him. They gained entrance to the castle by strategy, and guarded every way of egress, calling upon the marquis to surrender. He escaped to this chapel, and somewhere about this altar disappeared from his pursuers. They watched for him, and encamped for days in this chapel, trying to discover him, but in vain. He was missing for months. The war took another turn; the side the Mountherons had championed became the winning side; and one day the marquis walked forth from this chapel, hale and strong as ever, and resumed control over his property. He had been concealed for months in some secret hiding-place under the chapel, or in its walls."

"Do you know the secret of that hiding-place?"

"No one knows—not even the present marquis. The secret was one that was handed down from the father to his eldest son for centuries. It served a good purpose during the wars. The late marquis, being a lineal descendant of the old line, knew the secret of the Cavalier's retreat; so did Lord Stratford Heron know; but the secret perished with those two. The present lord was not in the direct line, and had never been informed of it. The retreat would be of no account in these unromantic times except to tourists and lovers of the marvelous, yet I own I should like to find it."

He groped about among the carvings of the altar, while Alex studied the inscriptions upon the marble tablets let into the floor.

"These ancient English castles have a good many secrets about them which no one living can solve," observed the young earl, as he desisted from his useless task; "but not a castle in the kingdom has more thrilling tales connected with it than this of Mount Heron. The Herons are a grand old race, Alex, in spite of the cloud that has fallen upon them in later times, and they have a grand history."

From the chapel they went to the hot-houses and forcing-houses, the graperies, pineries and orangeries. The magnitude of all these luxurious appurtenances astonished Alex. Upon this bleak Cornish bluff, swept by the storms of the Atlantic, were gathered the choicest fruits of every clime, all in magnificent profusion and perfection. The hanging gardens, spread upon terraces, exhibited traces of their summer glory. The park below was an ideal of beauty.

"Mount Heron is occupied the year around, except for two or three months during the London season," said Lord Kingscourt. "The marquises of Mountheron have always maintained a princely state, entertaining guests in great numbers. One can see how Lord Stratford Heron must have loved the home of his ancestors, and how he must have suffered at the thought of losing this splendid heritage!"

They slowly returned to the dwelling. On entering the hall a servent presented Lord Kingscourt with a letter which had just arrived for him by special messenger from Clyffebourne.

Alex stood still, her heart beating wildly, while the earl tore open the missive and read it.

It contained simply a request from Lady Vivian Clyffe that Lord Kingscourt would come to her at Clyffebourne at his earliest convenience. She desired to see him upon a matter of the utmost importance.

The earl crushed the letter in his hand and explained the contents of the letter to Alex. Then he rang and ordered his horse to be brought around, and went up to his room to get ready for the ride.

Alex, full of misgivings, passed on to the morning-room. A house-maid, who was replenishing the fire, told her that Mrs. Ingestre had been seized with one of her bad turns, had gone to bed, and was undergoing an application of mustard-plasters and hot-water bottles. Mrs. Ingestre had left a message, however, for Miss Strange, desiring the latter to amuse herself, and to excuse the unavoidable absence of her hostess.

Thus left to herself, Alex went out of doors again, returning to the ruins which had a strange charm for her. She wandered on to the chapel, again traversed the dim aisles, and sat down upon the steps, in the shadow of the overhanging altar.

A bat flew from a niche near the roof out at one of the window-openings. The noisy cries of rooks were heard from the adjacent ruins: the roar of the sea penetrated in a hoarse murmur: yet all these sounds could not abate the general desolation of the spot, nor lessen its terrible gloom.

Alex believed that Lady Vivian desired to consult Lord Kingscourt in reference to herself. She trembled lest her lover's faith in her should vanish before the revelations which were likely to tell so terribly against her. She was thinking sorrowfully that her march seemed to be over the graves of her love and friendship, of all she held dear, when the sound of steps among the ruins startled her.

The next moment two men entered the chapel.

Alex shrank back under the altar, believing the new-comers tourists, who would speedily depart.

The voice of one of them struck upon her ear with a familiar sound.

It was the voice of Pierre Renard.

Alex peered cautiously from her concealment and verified her suspicion. One of the new-comers was Lord Mountheron's valet. The other was a Frenchman, who strongly resembled him, but who had not the long, livid scar that disfigured his face.

"Why, this is the safest spot in the kingdom!" Renard was saying, evidently in response to some interrogatory of his companion. "This chapel is believed to be haunted like the ruins outside. Not a servant at Mount Heron would dare enter these walls even in the daytime, except by special command of my lord and in plenty of company. In the park, there are the keepers. In the castle, the servants. Here we have only the bats, the rooks, and the sea. We need not fear to talk freely. Sit down."

There were ancient carved benches scattered about. The two men sat down upon one of these in a dark nook and quite near to the altar. Their lowest tones penetrated readily to the girl's ears. Breathless, she crouched in deathly silence under the altar, in a position from which she could see them both.

"Lucky I happened to see you, Jean, before you reached the castle door," said Pierre Renard. "Not one of the servants saw you, I am sure. And if they did, they would have taken you for a tourist. This is visitors' day."

"But won't visitors come here?"

"My lord excludes visitors lately. No one will be admitted to view the ruins. I am priviliged at Mount Heron, as everybody knows, and if I break a regulation, there is no one dare reprove me."

"Except my lord," said Jean Renard.

"Except no one. I am a greater man than you think, my brother. But let us come to business. You are returned to England after three weeks. You went to Greece?"

"As you told me, Pierre."

"You spied out the parentage of this Miss Strange?"

"I did."

"You visited her home?"

Jean Renard answered in the affirmative.

"You saw her father?"

"Yes, and talked with him."

"That was well done. You 're a shrewd fellow, Jean Renard, and will have earned the sum I promised you. Now for your report. Quick! Who is this Mr. Strange?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

◆

THE CADI'S JUDGMENT.

A SKETCH OF THE ORIENT.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

In the village of Shah Haman, deeply buried in the wilds of the Aladag mountains, the Cadi Al-Bassa sat in judgment before the people, and for many miles around there was no judge above him, nor was there any court that could reverse his decisions. His wisdom was proverbial. Those who carried their cases before him were sure of even and exact justice, and those who thought to deceive him were very sure to be themselves exposed. People thought that the Cadi must receive assistance from the genii of Olympus, else how could he see into things which seemed beyond the wit of man to reach?

A true and perfect report of one of Al-Bassa's judgments will give a better understanding of his method than could any amount of philosophical analysis.

In a quiet, sheltered nook upon a mountain-side of the Aladags, stood the cot of the old astrologer, Abdar Nazor. He was known throughout the whole Kiangarian region as an astrologer; but, truly, he was a philosopher, and an eager and earnest student of Nature in all her departments, though a study of the heavenly bodies was his chief delight. Near to his dwelling, on the top of a high tower, was his observatory, where a single assistant shared with him his labors. This assistant was a scholar named Noureddin. In the cot was employed a woman named Miriam, who had been adopted by Abdar Nazor when a child, and who had grown to womanhood in his employ. It was her province to care for the material wants of her master, and to render such assistance in his study as he might require.

At length it came to pass that Noureddin died, and from that time Abdar Nazor failed in strength of body, and in disposition to labor. He had thought that he should never admit another man to his household, but as his physical powers failed there were found many things in and about the cot and the observatory to be done which a woman could not do. So, when the aged savant had become so weak as to need a support to his steps, he hired a man of Geurel to come in and help him. This man had been a scribe in the bazäar of his native village; a man of wit and education; comparatively a young man; and named Marmiel. If there was an evil look in his small, snakish eye, Abdar Nazor did not notice it; but Miriam noticed it, and Marmiel was not slow to discover that she had done so; and this discovery made him hate the faithful serving-woman; but Miriam plainly saw that he disliked her, and that thoughts of vengeance were in his mind.

The old astronomer became at length so feeble that he would not allow Miriam to be absent from him for any considerable length of time, and it became necessary that another woman should be employed to look after the household. Marmiel said he knew a woman peculiarly qualified and adapted to fill the place, and he was directed to bring her. She was a woman of Geurel, and was called Miriam—the same name borne by the old domestic. She was younger than the other Miriam, and handsomer. In fact, she was bright-eyed, fair-faced, and pretty, and quickly betrayed the possession of a goodly fund of wit and intelligence. She put forth every exertion to please the aged master and did not fail. Though no human being could have weakened his love for his first Miriam, yet this second contrived, by smiles and sweet words, to find his heart and to gain a place therein.

It was very soon evident to our own true Mirian that her namesake and Marmiel had been on familiar terms in time past, and that their friendship was very ardent now. When he could do so without taking her from her proper work Marmiel would call the girl with him to the observatory, whither he went on pleasant evenings to note the position of a few of the principal stars whose relative movements the savant had been studying when he was forced to suspend his labors; and in many other ways did the man contrive to hold secret interviews with the housekeeper. Once the old astrologer's nurse accidentally overheard a few words spoken by Marmiel to the woman whom he had brought in, and she was very sure he addressed her as one whom he proposed to marry. After that the elder Miriam had no difficulty in understanding the familiarity that existed between those two. They were simply lovers, and affianced. She rather sympathized with them than otherwise, and kept their secret.

Abdar Nazor was growing weaker day after day, and when he finally knew that the hand of death was upon him he resolved to make his will. He regarded the Miriam who had so long served him with paternal affection; he knew her to be true and good; and he knew that she would make a proper use of whatever means he might leave in her keeping. During his long life he had been not only frugal and industrious, but fortune had often smiled upon him. Knowing what a temptation to evil it might be to the lawless wanderers among the mountains, if the fact of his possessing wealth were to be published, he had kept it profoundly secret, and probably Marmiel, when called in to witness his last will and testament, became the first possessor of the knowledge that Abdar Nazor was a wealthy man, and that his wealth—the bulk of it—was in gold and precious stones, locked up in a strong box in the very chamber where he then lay.

But Marmiel was not the only witness to the will. At the foot of the mountain lived a vine-dresser, named Ali Kinah, whom Abdar Nazor had often seen, and who appeared to be a simple-minded, honest man, well qualified to witness the deed he had made. The younger Miriam was sent to request the vine-dresser to come to the mountain cot, and when she had gone, and while Marmiel sat by the master's couch, engaged in arranging certain papers, the elder Miriam—the true and loyal—was persuaded to go to her chamber and seek the rest which she much needed; for she had watched by the sick man's side for many a long and weary night. She went as directed, and when once her head had found the pillow, she slept soundly—slept so soundly that strangers came and went the while, with horse and mule, and she did not awake.

Aye, the faithful, true-hearted servitor's namesake, younger, and more beautiful of form and face than herself, came with Ali Kinah, talking to him by the way, and introducing him to her master on their arrival; and a neighbor from the northern slope of the mountain came with his horse, and both these were with the dying man, and the sleeper did not know it.

By and by, when the business had all been done to the master's satisfaction, the visiting witnesses were dismissed, and Abdar Nazor called Marmiel and the fair-faced housekeeper to his bedside. What he had to say to them he wished to say before the daughter of his adoption awoke.

"My children," he said, in husky, weakening tones, "you have been very good to me, and I know that you have done all that lay in your power toward making lighter the burden of my distress; and, moreover, I wish to acknowledge in a substantial manner my appreciation of your kindness. I could not mention you in my will. In making that instrument I desired to recognize my dear Miriam as the sole partner of my joys and my sorrows through the long years of her untiring devotion and self-sacrifice. She has never known until now that I possessed wealth. Her devotion has been the free-will offering of her heart. She is, in deed and in truth, the child of my love—my daughter—and her alone I would recognize as such. But, my dear children, you shall not go unrewarded. In these two parcels are two equal sums of gold. They will give you many comforts, and, should you marry, as I have sometimes thought you might, these sums combined will be sufficient to purchase a good and comfortable home. And, moreover, if my Miriam should elect to remain here in the old castle, as she doubtless will, she will find pleasure in giving you welcome to the shelter and rest of her roof-tree whenever you may bend your steps hither."

And, thus speaking, the old man pushed over upon the little table by his bedside two bags of gold; his countenance glowed with a loving light and warmth, and he thought not that the twain before him could betray his confidence. He heard their earnest words of gratitude, and their loud protestations of love and devotion, and he believed them sincere. Poor man! He fancied that the fair and beautiful exterior covered a soul of truth and virtue, and that the soft speeches of love and devotion flowed direct from a fount of goodness. So he lay back upon his pillow well satisfied, and when he had seen the twain depart with their gold, he slept. He slept, and did not awake to the scenes of this lower life.

When the elder Miriam went in to ask what she should do for her master's comfort she found but the lifeless tenement, over which, when assured that the vital spark had fled, she wept hot tears of bitter mourning, and by the side of which she knelt in humble, fervent prayer. The prayer made lighter her burden, and brought a ray of sunshine from the realms of Peace.

When Marmiel and Miriam the younger were told of the old man's death, they wept and tore their hair, and cried aloud in their obtrusive sorrow.

The funeral took place, the astronomer's mortal remains having been deposited in a crypt beneath his observatory, as he had desired, and then the proper functionaries, by order of the satrap, came in to make disposition of the property.

Marmiel produced the will, and led forth the younger Miriam as the "Well-beloved Miriam" of the testator's love and esteem! And the younger Miriam, so young and fair, with bowed head and blushing cheeks, stood forth and acknowledged herself the heir of the old man's choice!

The true Miriam was thunderstruck. For a time she was too deeply moved for speech. She started to her feet, and then sank back and buried her face in her hands. Awhile so, and then she started up once more and presented her claim. She declared that she was the Miriam mentioned in the will—that she was the only Miriam—the only person—who had lived with Abdar Nazor for years, caring for him, helping him in his labors, and faithfully serving and loving him.

Marmiel answered that she spoke falsely, and he swore that the other—the younger and fairer—was the Miriam of the will; and Miriam the younger joined him in the assertion.

The case was thus presenting points for judgment beyond the powers of the notaries of the governor, and they sent it up to the Cadi.

Al-Bassa, Cadi of Shah Haman, sat in his hall of judgment, and listened to the pleas of the contestants. It was an important case. It had been ascertained that the astrologer had accumulated much wealth, and that he had left it by will to a single heir—"to Miriam, his well-beloved," who had been unto him as a child of his heart and soul, giving all the years of her young life to his good, and failing never in her tender care and unselfish devotion.

And now a young, fair-faced girl, seeming modest and good, stood forth and claimed that she was the Miriam thus designated. She swore, point blank, that she had lived with Abdar Nazor from childhood, and that this other woman, claiming to be called also Miriam, had been hired by Marmiel only a few months before to come in and help in the housework.

Then stood forth Marmiel, who swore directly and emphatically that the younger female was the true heiress. He did not hesitate, nor stammer, nor blush; but he told the story as he had framed it in his own wicked mind, and adhered to it.

Then was called the vine-dresser, Ali Kinah, who had been summoned to witness the will. He had seen the younger claimant at the dying man's bedside, but had seen nothing of the other. He did not know that he had ever seen the elder claimant until he saw her there in court.

Next stood forth a poor husbandman from the northern slope of the mountain, named Marouf, who had been witness to the will of Abdar Nazor. He had seen this younger female by the old man's dying bed, and had seen no other.

Ah! Marmiel and his betrothed had laid their plan deeply, and had made sure that every particle of positive evidence, other than individual assertion, should be in their favor.

The true Miriam, bowed and grieved, could only stand before the Cadi and tell her simple story. He listened to her patiently, and allowed her to go on without interruption. It was a curious case. Covered by the story of service were many years, and yet so quiet and secluded had been the life of the mountain cot that no living witness could be found other than those who had testified. Of course, scholars had called upon the astronomer in his study, and in his observatory, but they had not seen the woman who cared for his household.

Aye,—for long years the true and faithful Miriam had served her master, being companion of his toil, and helper in all things within her power to understand; and here were two women claiming the character each for herself.

The aged Cadi, when he had listened attentively to the last story told—the story of the elder claimant—sent all out from the chamber save the younger Miriam and a single scribe. When they had gone, and the doors had been closed, he turned to the woman, and said:

"My child, as thou art the well-sustained claimant, I would have from thee a statement, in thine own hand, of thine age, thy place of birth, and thy parentage, that we may deposit it with the records in our archives of those possessing wealth."

And he gave to her a sheet of paper, and an uncut quill, and a sharp knife.

But the girl, with a blush, said that she could not write. Her master had always done his own writing.

"Had not thy master's eyes failed him in these later years?"

"Not so much as to prevent his writing, sir."

"Very well. If you will cut me a pen from that quill, I will write myself."

But, with more blushing and much trembling, the girl declared that she could not make a pen. She had never done such a thing. Her master had never taught her.

The fair-faced Miriam was dismissed, and the elder Miriam was called in; and to her, when she had taken a seat at a table whereon were ink and paper and whole quills with the sharp knife, the Cadi made the same demand that he had made to the other.

The elder Miriam hesitated not a moment. She took up the knife, and turning to the light, she fashioned a pen quickly and deftly. When she had clipped the point, and had tested it upon her thumb nail, the Cadi asked to take it. She gave it to him, and he wrote with it, finding it perfect, as well as beautifully fashioned.

"My daughter," he said, with a benignant look, "thou mayest write thy name, together with the facts I mentioned, for I would possess the sign-manual of the true heir of Abdar Nazor."

Aye,—the Cadi's judgment had been formed in his own mind, and it only remained for him to announce it in open court. And when, speaking as one gifted with inspiration, he pronounced the pale-faced, meek-eyed woman to be the true heir, and then, with lowering brow, denounced the two conspirators for their wickedness, no voice was raised in opposition.

Guilt makes its worker a coward when exposure comes suddenly and unexpectedly upon him, and Marmiel dared not contend further; and when Marmiel shrank back appalled, his frail accomplice sank down an object of pity. But pity could not prevent the punishment due, though the earnest pleading of Miriam the True was successful in making the punishment much lighter than it might otherwise have been.

THE MYSTIC SPELL.

BY DR. C. D. GARDETTE.

There's a mystic spell in the air to day—
A strange, sweet glamour o'er earth and sky,
And the sordid world seems far away,
And holier, purer thoughts arise
In the wearied heart, and the yearning eyes
Look ever upward, we scarce know why.

There is no halt in the march of Time;
The streams still roll to the restless seas;
The winds still carry from clime to clime
Their wordless message; the birds still swing
Through the waving groves with tireless wing
And chant their loves to the listening trees.

The flowers still swell from bud to bloom;
The sap still flows through the forest hearts;
Yea, the earth still whirls from glow to gloom
And the myriad spheres in their orbits roll:
Then whence is this glamour on the soul—
This strange, sweet peace that to-day imparts?

Ah, the streams may flow and the birds may sing
And the winds their wondrous message bear,
And the mighty planets whirl and swing,
And the flowers bloom; but the echoes all
With a softer cadence seem to fall,
For the spell of Rest is in the air!

This is the mystic spell that leaves
A holy calm in the worldling's breast;
That stills the struggling heart, and weaves
A glamour of peace to win the eye
And turn its wandering gaze on High—
The God-given spell of the Sabbath Rest!

THE NEW YEAR'S CALL.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

A great, cheerful kitchen, with the snow piled up in ermine drifts against the outside of the windows, and a view of gray woods wrestling against a leaden sky—a kitchen where the shoots of carmine flame wove themselves in and out of the moss-fringed logs, like so many fiery serpents at play, and the great oleander tree in the corner was putting out its clusters of pink buds in reckless defiance of the season—that was where Aunt Pandora was at work frying crullers when Uncle David Doty came in from the post-office, bringing a breath of the Artic regions with him.

"Any letters?" said Aunt Pandora, fishing a particularly brown and savory twist out of a sea of boiling lard.

"Yes," said Uncle David, "a letter from Evelyn. And they're in trouble again. Want more money."

Aunt Pandora shook her head.

"After that thousand dollars you sent 'em last July?" said she. "I'm afraid Evelyn's husband is'nt a good manager."

"Business difficulties you see," said Uncle David. "Evelyn tells me they are living with the utmost economy, and denying themselves every luxury."

"Poor dear," said Aunt Pandora, benignantly.

"I really think we must spare 'em another thousand," said Uncle David, who had a soft spot in his heart for his niece and adopted child, Evelyn Elgin.

"A thousand dollars is a deal of money," said Aunt Pandora, solemnly.

"Yes, I know it," admitted her husband. "But the Lord has blessed us with plenty of worldly goods, and how can we better use it than in helping our little Evelyn along? We were poor folks ourselves once, Pandora, beginning the world."

"So we were," acquiesced the old lady, as she set off the pot of lard, carried her pan of fragrant crullers into the pantry and took off her striped calico cooking apron.

"And I'll tell you what I've made up my mind to do," said Mr. Doty, putting both hands on his knees, and staring hard at the blazing logs.

"What?"

"I'll go to New York myself and see the child," said Uncle David. "It may be they're actually suffering. Anyhow, I'll take my bank-book along, and do what I can for 'em."

"Well," said Aunt Pandora, "I think it would be a good plan. And you can take along some of these fresh crullers and a pair of dressed fowls, and some of the red Baldwin apples in your carpet-bag. If it wasn't for my rheumatism, I'd be glad of the chance to go along myself. Only to think that we haven't either of us seen Evelyn since she married that store-clerk and went to the city to live."

And so Uncle David Doty started off in the orange glow of the first day of all the New Year, and walked to the railway station while the sunrise was yet turning the snowy landscape to a sheet of diamonds.

It was a long and tedious ride, but what cared the old gentleman as he sat there, with the well-stuffed carpet-bag beside him, and a basket of apples beyond—such apples as little Evelyn had been wont to love as a child, when she had climbed the orchard wall, and nestled in the high grass under the trees. And when he finally reached the great depot, it seemed as if he were actually stepping into Pandemonium.

"Never was in such a noisy place in all my life before," thought Uncle David, as he made his way through the crowd. "And how the New Yorkers do stare."

For, in truth and in fact, Uncle David Doty presented a sufficiently strong contrast to those around him to induce people to turn and look the second time. Six feet high, with a complexion rosy as a fall pear, a long white beard reaching nearly to his waist, and a shaggy fur overcoat, he strode along with the basket in one hand and the bag in the other, inquiring his way with a persistence which would have done credit to a second Christopher Columbus in search of a new Western continent. And it was just noon when Uncle Daniel at last found himself in East Barron street.

"My man," said he to a policeman who was trying to keep himself warm by vigorously slapping his arms across his chest, "which is No. 99?"

"Ninety-nine?" said the policeman: "Half-way down the block—that big house with the blinds all closed."

"Can't be," said Uncle David.

"But it is," retorted the policeman.

"Look-a-here, my man," argued the old gentleman. "I'm lookin' for my neice, married to a store-clerk, Mrs. Elgin by name. Now is it likely they'd be livin' in a palace like *that?*"

"Don't know anything about that," said the policeman. "But it's No. 99."

And he went on slapping himself more vindictively than ever,

Uncle David stood staring at the tall house a few moments more, and then he ascended the steps and rang the bell.

"It can't do no harm to inquire, anyhow," said he to himself.

A maid in a fluted muslin cap, trimmed with myrtle-green ribbons, and a flounced merino dress, answered the far-off tinkle of the bell.

"Does Mrs. Evelyn Elgin live here?" said Mr. Doty.

"Guess you've mistook the door, Mister," said the damsel, superciliously, glancing at the basket and bag.

"Does Mrs. Evelyn Elgin live here?" repeated Mr. Doty.

"Yes, she lives here, but she's receiving."

"Doing *what?*" said Uncle David.

"Aint it New Year's day?" said the girl, with a pert toss of the myrtle ribbons. "Receiving *calls*, stupid!"

"Very well," said Uncle David, staring past the girl's head at a vista of gaslighted hall, paneled in pink and gold, and decorated with stands of flowers. "Then *I'll* call."

"She's receiving her gentlemen friends," remonstrated the maid.

"Very well—I'm a gentleman friend of hers."

And he pushed unceremoniously past.

"Your card, sir, if you please," said the maid, holding out her hand in some consternation.

"I haven't any card," said Uncle David.

And he walked, basket, bag, shaggy great-coat and all, into an elegant suite of parlors, where the velvet carpets, mirrored walls, gilded furniture, and great, glittering chandelier, all seemed to glisten and sparkle together. In a bay window at the end a refreshment table was set out, with a goodly show of cut-glass decanters, silver coffee-urn, and piled-up tropical fruit, while near by, chatting gayly to a group of gentlemen, stood a lady in a trailing pink silk dress, with flowers in her hair, and jewels sparkling at her throat. Uncle David Doty could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Niece Evelyn," said he, slowly, "is it possible that this is—*you?*"

Mrs. Elgin uttered a little terrified scream, and then covered her face with her hands.

"Uncle David!" she gasped.

The old man looked drily around him.

"Poor!" commented he. "Very poor—utmost economy—denying yourselves every luxury. Yes, I see! I see!"

"But, Uncle David—"

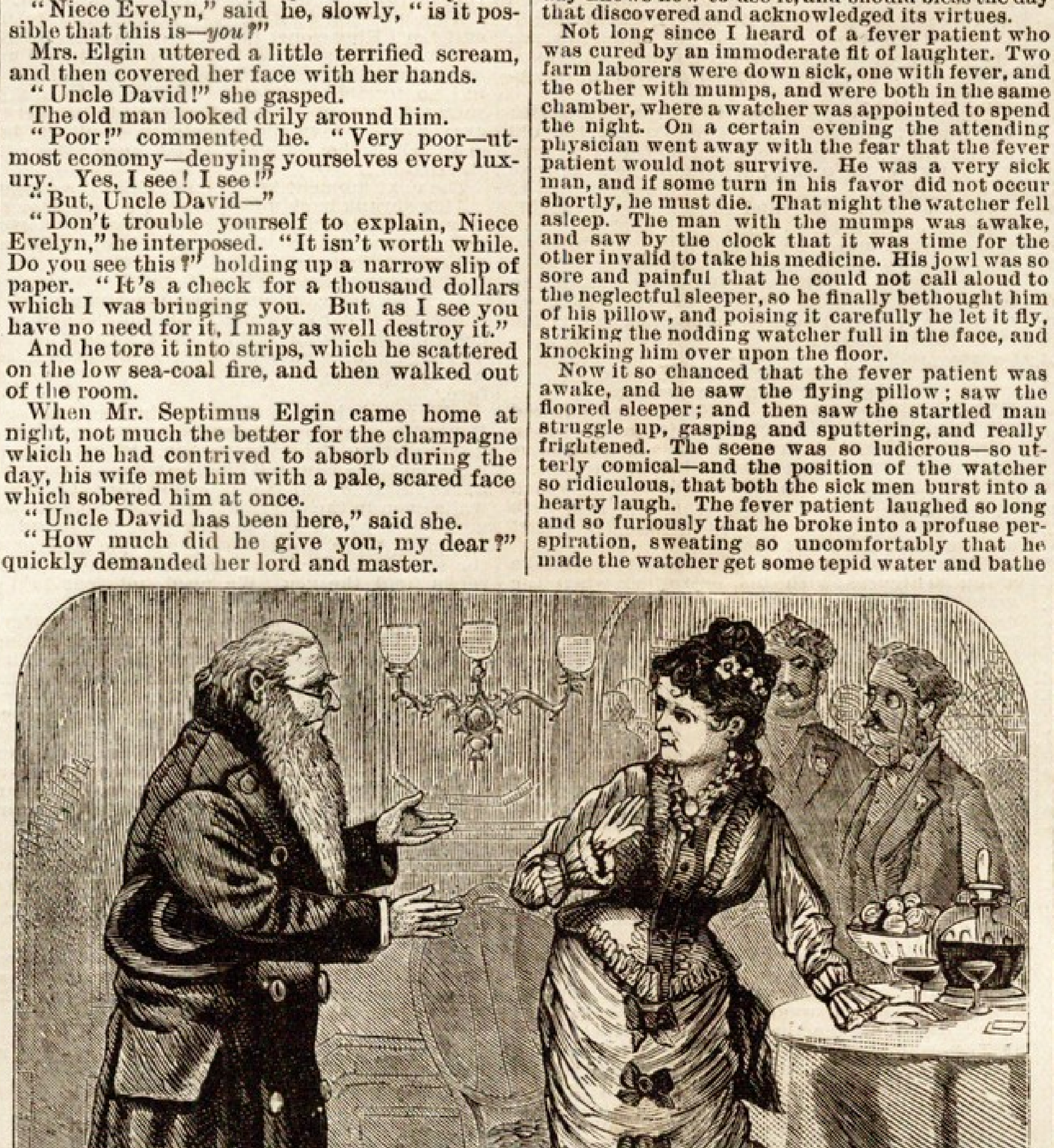
"Don't trouble yourself to explain, Niece Evelyn," he interposed. "It isn't worth while. Do you see this?" holding up a narrow slip of paper. "It's a check for a thousand dollars which I was bringing you. But as I see you have no need for it, I may as well destroy it."

And he tore it into strips, which he scattered on the low sea-coal fire, and then walked out of the room.

When Mr. Septimus Elgin came home at night, not much the better for the champagne which he had contrived to absorb during the day, his wife met him with a pale, scared face which sobered him at once.

"Uncle David has been here," said she.

"How much did he give you, my dear?" quickly demanded her lord and master.



"Nothing; and he is estranged forever."

"Then," said Mr. Septimus Elgin, slapping one hand vehemently upon his knee, "we're ruined!"

Mr. and Mrs. Elgin sat looking at each other, with the faded flowers exhaling a sickly perfume around them, and the gas-lights flickering overhead. Nor is it asserting too much to say that they were *not* happy.

It was scarcely a month afterward that Uncle David and Aunt Pandora were sitting by their blazing fire of pine logs, with its resinous "drip, drip," bubbling down into the ashes below, when there was a low click to the latch, and a slight, vailed figure came hurrying in.

"Why!" cried Uncle David, rising to his feet in breathless amazement, "it aint never—our Evelyn!"

She threw herself, sobbing, into Aunt Pandora's kindly arms.

"Oh, take me back, take me back," she sobbed, "for I have no other home left."

And then she explained to them that the brilliant Septimus having forged his employer's name to a check, had been compelled to flee the country, and that sheriff's officers were even then in possession of the handsome house in East Barron street.

"My dear, let bygones be bygones," said Uncle David, kindly. "We'll blot out the past, now and forever. You are our little Evelyn again—and now let's say no more about it."

And so the good old farmer forgot and forgave it all; but if Evelyn lives to the age of a feminine Methusaleh, she never can forget that New Year's day.

NATURE'S MEDICINE.

It has happened many times, where the skill of the physician was making no headway, that the intervention of some sudden, exciting cause, assisting nature in a suspended function, has wrought a wondrous cure. I know that I was myself so cured, if not saved from fatal issue. In my boyhood—a great, stout, robust boy of twelve years—I was taken down, in mid-winter, with typhus fever. I had lain six days and six nights without arising from my bed, and I remember that on that last evening old Dr. Ephraim Buck, of Malden, shook his head ominously, telling my mother that he didn't know, "The boy might weather it;" he hoped so. Be sure of one thing: My mother had not suffered any calomel to pass my lips. Dr. Buck sputtered a good deal, but he had to succumb. So I had not that poison in my bones.

Well, that night is a red-letter period of my life—its scenes as vivid and distinct in my memory as though they were incidents of to-day. My father watched with me, giving me medicine as directed during the first half of the night. From nine o'clock until midnight he wrote upon a table at the foot of the bed. After that he lay down upon the outside of the bed, on the back side, and quickly fell asleep. I heard him snore.

For hours I had lain there upon that tortured pillow, my mind strangely wandering; my eyes discovering all sorts of hobgoblins on the walls and curtains; the one all-pervading sense being that of burning, agonizing thirst. Upon the bureau burned a nurse-lamp, with a pot of cracker-water over it, which I was suffered to sip from a teaspoon at intervals. That was all I was allowed to drink. For hours I had been thinking of the old pump-room! O! if I could only grasp that old tin drinking-cup, hanging by the water bucket! Upon this theme my thoughts dwelt, and never did a drowning man, struggling in the waste of waters, long more for a plank upon which to rest than did I long for the cooling libation!

When I heard my watcher snore, an insane idea seized me, and I acted upon it instantly. I crawled out from the bed—crawled away through an entry-way—through another chamber—through an upper hall, to the kitchen stairs; down those stairs I worked my way backward upon my hands and knees; down to the kitchen, and to the door of the pump-room, which was fastened with a hasp. I unhooked it, and out in that winter night, to the little porch-like coop, where was the pump. I found the waterpail full, with a crust of ice upon its surface. I struggled up and grasped the tin pot, and with its bottom edge broke through the ice.

Talk of the nectar which Jupiter sipped! The gods of Olympus never knew such exquisite joy of libation as that which was mine in that moment. I drank of that ice-cold water my fill, and, *I walked back to my bed.* I had crawled down, but the draught stimulated every atom of my being, and gave me strength. I reached the bed and crawled into my nest. I was awakened by my father, whom I found standing over me, wiping my face and my neck and bosom with a towel. The profuse perspiration which had broken out all over me frightened him. Little did he guess then what had caused it.

I slept again, and in the morning, when the doctor came, his face shone like bright brass. He was in raptures. "It is wonderful! The fever is entirely broken! My dear madam, the boy is safe!"

It was a long time before my parents knew of my escapade on that January night. Dr. Buck was told of it in time. He shook his head dubiously, with the remark: "It ought to have killed him!"

But it did not; and though I would not recommend another to do what I did on that occasion, yet I would solemnly declare that pure cold water is one of the grandest medicines for fever, and it is simply cruel to deny the tortured patient, literally burning with thirst, that simple, God-given element of life and health. Don't understand me as advocating an indiscriminate gulping and sousing of water. No, no. The true physician of to-day knows how to use it, and should bless the day that discovered and acknowledged its virtues.

Not long since I heard of a fever patient who was cured by an immoderate fit of laughter. Two farm laborers were down sick, one with fever, and the other with mumps, and were both in the same chamber, where a watcher was appointed to spend the night. On a certain evening the attending physician went away with the fear that the fever patient would not survive. He was a very sick man, and if some turn in his favor did not occur shortly, he must die. That night the watcher fell asleep. The man with the mumps was awake, and saw by the clock that it was time for the other invalid to take his medicine. His jowl was so sore and painful that he could not call aloud to the neglectful sleeper, so he finally bethought him of his pillow, and poising it carefully he let it fly, striking the nodding watcher full in the face, and knocking him over upon the floor.

Now it so chanced that the fever patient was awake, and he saw the flying pillow; saw the floored sleeper; and then saw the startled man struggle up, gasping and sputtering, and really frightened. The scene was so ludicrous—so utterly comical—and the position of the watcher so ridiculous, that both the sick men burst into a hearty laugh. The fever patient laughed so long and so furiously that he broke into a profuse perspiration, sweating so uncomfortably that he made the watcher get some tepid water and bathe his face and neck and bosom, and wipe them dry. On the next morning the fever was effectually broken, and the man rapidly recovered from that time. The quickening of the heart, and of the whole life-current, and the opening of the pores by that sudden and robust laugh, had saved him.

S. C., JR.

SCIENCE.

At the annual meeting of the Kansas Academy of Science in October, Professor F. H. Snow, of the Kansas University, read a paper which we find in the last number of the American Naturalist under the title, "Hunting Amblychila." The *Amblychila Cylindriformis*, to which this paper refers, is a very rare American insect, standing at the head of a ravenous family of beetles known as the tiger-beetles. So rare is this beetle that a price-list of insects published at Cambridge within a year gave its value as twelve dollars a single specimen. Professor Snow states, however, that the search for it in western Kansas has been unusually successful during the past season, several hundred specimens having been taken by different scientific parties. This is ascribed chiefly to the recent discovery of the nocturnal habits of the beetle. One of the author's companions ascertained that the insect was a favorite prey of the skunk, and it appears that entomologists in search of it are exposed to no slight danger from the attacks of rabid skunks. The bite of these animals has proved fatal to man in nine cases out of ten, and the number of fatal cases on record exceeds fifty. Professor Snow also says that rattlesnakes were encountered by his expedition almost every day last summer in western Kansas and eastern Colorado.

In his essays on the colors of animals and plants, Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace arrives at the conclusion that tropical light or heat cannot in any sense be considered the cause of color in animals, and yet he says it is an undoubted fact that all the more intense and gorgeous tints are manifested by the animal life of the tropics, while there is a decided preponderance of highly colored species of butterflies and birds in tropical regions. As yet we know only a few of the causes of this superiority in vivid coloration. Mr. Wallace thinks the concealment afforded by the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics has had a good deal of influence in protecting colored animals which would readily fall victims to their enemies in the leafless winter woods of the temperate zone. Another probable cause is the uniformity of climate which the tropics have long enjoyed, while there is reason to believe that the changes of climate which the temperate regions of the earth have undergone, and especially the glacial period, must have extinguished hosts of brilliantly colored insects and birds which formerly existed there.

Professor James D. Dana, of Yale College, has been awarded the Copley Medal for 1877 by the Royal Society of London, in recognition of his researches in biology, geology and mineralogy, extending over half a century. The Davy Medal, founded out of the proceeds of silver plate left to the Royal Society by Sir Humphrey Davy, has just been bestowed for the first time, the recipients being Professors Bunsen and Kirchhoff, whose great discoveries in spectrum analysis are thus honored. Professor Oswald Heer, of Zurich, who is distinguished for his writings on the former geology, botany and zoology of Europe, also receives a Royal Medal; and a like distinction is awarded to Mr. Frederick A. Abel, whose experiments concerning modern explosive agents have been of much value. Of the four medals thus presented only one goes to an Englishman. This appreciation of foreign scientific work is highly creditable to the Royal Society.

In an official report of a visit to the Crozet group of islands in the Antarctic ocean, Captain Lindesay Brine, of the British navy, states that on landing upon Possession Island he found himself surrounded by animals which had not the slightest fear of men or their guns. "Hundreds of seals," he writes, "which were resting on the damp grass bordering the stream which at this point enters the sea, made no attempt to escape from us; the albatrosses, also, would not move from their nests on the ground. Some of these magnificent birds measured eleven feet across the wings, but they only showed resistance when actually seized by the sailors, and did not seem to have any sense of danger even then."

Among the remarkable gems recently exported from Russia to meet demands occasioned by the Eastern war are an aquamarine of a deep sea-green tint, weighing more than six ounces and a half, and a topaz, which is described as equal to that bought at Goa for the Grand Mogul at a price exceeding fifty thousand dollars. A mineralogist in London has received these precious stones from Moscow.

The deposit of dew, with reference to the temperature, can be observed with much facility by employing a modified form of the condensation hygrometer of Regnault, devised by M. Alluard, and described in *Comptes Rendus.* This instrument shows that the temperature which prevails when dew first makes its appearance is precisely the same as the temperature when the dew finally disappears.

The publication of the reports of the French expeditions to observe the transit of Venus has drawn attention to the fact that the late M. Le Verrier refused to attend the meetings of the Transit Commission, because he was opposed to that method of determining the sun's distance. He thought the problem could be better solved by observing an opposition of the planet Mars, such as occurred early in the autumn.

A number of English physicians contemplate establishing a quarterly review with the somewhat remarkable title of *Brain:* a Journal of Neurological Science—neurology being that part of anatomy which treats of the nerves. A publication devoted to the mental aspects of the brain already exists in the quarterly called *Mind*, to which we have sometimes had occasion to refer.

Dr. J. M. Hildebrandt, whom the Berlin Academy of Sciences sent to Eastern Africa to ascend Mount Kenia, one of the two great snowy peaks of that part of the globe, has returned unsuccessful, after narrowly escaping death by poison at the hands of the natives. The hostile tribes about the foot of the mountain compelled him to turn back when within plain sight of the summit.

An anthropologist in Moscow, Professor Bogdanow, has made a number of interesting casts of skulls out of papier maché. He recently presented a set of them to the Anthropological Institute of London.

A report by Mr. Lyman, geologist to the Government of Japan, indicates that there are unexplored coal deposits to the amount of one hundred and fifty millions of tons on the Japanese island of Yesso.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. T. M. (Somerset, Ky.) says: "Please favor one who has been a constant reader of the *Ledger* for the past fifteen years, and who comes to you, not as a disappointed lover—for, thanks to Dame Fortune, my *affaires du cœur* are most happily arranged—but as one who seeks after practical information. First, I will begin with this quotation, viz:

'Pluck bright glory from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And drag up drowned honor by the locks'—

and will have to confess that, so far as my knowledge is concerned, its author is unknown, and I therefore ask you to relieve my inquisitiveness on this point. 2. The subject of 'woman suffrage' is just now agitating the brains of a young debating club of this place, and I desire to know the names and addresses of the most prominent advocates of this doctrine. Also, if not *too* troublesome, please give your opinion of this proposed innovation upon our time-honored custom of excluding the fair sex from the enjoyment of political privileges, and whether such, if made the law of our country, would be attended with beneficent results. 3. Please give the history of the 'trade dollar,' its value on a gold basis, and the object in making it 7 1-2 grains heavier than the celebrated 'dollar of the daddies.' By complying at an early date in your answers to correspondents, you will confer a favor." (1.) The quotation which you give—not quite accurately—is from Shakespeare's Henry IV. (2.) You will best gain your end by writing to the association for reports and pamphlets, in which you will have the subject discussed, and on the arguments of which you can make up your own mind. The *Ledger's* correspondents have to do their own thinking on such topics. (3.) For the history of the trade dollar, which would occupy too much of our space, and which is being discussed in the daily press, we refer you to the article "Coins" in Appletons' Cyclopædia.

MUSICIAN (Fair Haven) says: "From the kind manner in which you have always encouraged and advised the numerous readers of your most valuable paper, I am now induced to write to you. I am a young man twenty-one years of age. Three years ago I began to pay some attention to music, although I never have had a teacher. But in about three months, at the beginning of my studies, I have made considerable progress, enough to enable me to become a very good reader at sight. Now what I wish to know is, how can I use one thousand dollars to the very best advantage so as to procure a good knowledge of music? Where are the best and cheapest musical conservatories in the United States? And what would it cost to go to Europe and graduate from some conservatory in Germany or France? I have a great desire to become master of the cornet. I study every day about one and a half or two hours, and am using 'Arban's Complete Method.' Hoping you may not be taken aback by my numerous questions, I am, one of your many readers." There are no greater facilities anywhere in the United States than in New York. The cost of living is, of course, greater here than in many other places where music can be studied, but the facilities for receiving lessons and studying examples are larger here than elsewhere. As to the time and money required for graduation in Europe it is impossible to give a categorical answer. The cost will depend on the time, and the time will depend on the attainments with which you begin. A prudent young man can live in Germany for a year upon six or seven hundred dollars. In Germany itself the cost of living varies greatly—a circumstance which influences students considerably in their choice of universities.

HOPE says: "In reading over your answers to correspondents it occurred to me that perhaps you could give me some good advice in regard to a certain matter. I am a young man eighteen years old, and am very fond of the study of elocution, and have studied it considerably, and would like very much to become an actor. Of course no one wants to praise himself, but I was told by my teachers where I graduated that I had a fine voice, very fine gestures, made a good appearance, and had a very correct idea of elocution; and when I graduated I received a gold medal for being the best declaimer out of thirty scholars sent before the committee—those thirty being chosen from about fifteen thousand. After I graduated I went to work in an office, but have always hoped I might one day become an actor—no third class one, but one of 'the actors' of the day. Now, what I would like to know is how to commence, for surely Forrest, Davenport and others had to have a beginning. Trusting you will be kind enough to answer my letter in your columns I remain yours truly." Do you recollect the witticism of Punch? "Advice to those about to marry. Don't." We advise you if you are doing fairly in your present situation to hold to it. There are persons born and brought up in the families of theatrical ladies and gentlemen to whom stage-life comes in the order of things. They are numerous enough to supply the demand of society; and on their choice of the profession one's views would be modified by the consideration of their position. But we doubt the wisdom, on many accounts, of persons like you going out of other lines of life to the stage.

S. R. says: "I am in a very low state of health, have consulted many physicians in different parts of the country, have taken their medicines, read works on health, and endeavored to live according to the health laws, all of which I think have done me more harm than good. My trouble seems to be nervous prostration and general debility. My mind is constantly in operation day and night, awake or asleep, and many of my dreams are more horrible than I could possibly conceive of while awake. Professor ——, in an examination two years ago, said that the action of my brain constantly consumed vitality faster than I manufactured it, and told me to sleep nights with a wet cloth on my forehead, which I tried, and have been ten times worse since than I was before. I am aware that you do not claim to be a physician, but perhaps you may be able to give me some advice through the *Ledger.*" We suppress the Professor's name because he might not desire such publicity as your letter gives him. We are sorry for your suffering, and hope you have not the additional pain of feeling that your own course has been the cause of it. It would be idle for us, non-professional, as we are, and without the advantage of personal examination, to give advice where those who had every advantage have prescribed in vain. On general principles we reccommend simple food, regular work, exercise in the open air, and careful avoidance of both stimulants and narcotics.

ELLEN (St. Louis) says: "Having read your paper for the last twenty years, I take the liberty of asking your opinion about a few things. My husband is a merchant doing a good business, and has always been very kind and liberal until the past year. He has an income of from five to eight thousand dollars a year. Now the question is, How much should he allow me for clothing for myself, my daughter of fourteen years, and two boys, one nine years and one three. I tell him I am willing to abide by your decision. By giving this your attention you will confer a great favor." We respectfully decline this responsibility. We do not believe in wives contracting for the clothing of the family. The family is one, with one interest. Get the best clothing you can, with your husband's counsel and cooperation, for yourself and your children, according to your united judgment; and let your husband pay the bills. Men and women are married that they may be mutual helpers; and their children are their common care.

LEADER (Illinois) says: "Will you please answer, through the columns of your valuable paper, the *Ledger*, the following questions? What nation introduced the practice of making New Year's calls, and at what period? And please give a complete list of rules of etiquette to be observed in making New Year's calls, including salutations, greetings, cards, eating, time of call, length, &c." The Dutch are credited with introducing the custom, during the time of their ascendancy in New York. It is sufficient to ring the door-bell, get admission, send in your card, see the ladies of the house, express to them in simple, natural and sincere speech your wishes for their happiness during the year, and bow yourself out. If they offer you food, and you are hungry, take it. If they offer you stimulant, do not take it. Do not make silly complimentary speeches. Do not over-dress. Do not sit down. On no account tell the number of calls you have made, or do or say anything absurd on the face of it.

SUG (Woonsocket) says: "Will you please answer the following questions, and greatly relieve me? Mr. A. lives in St. Louis, and Mr. B. lives in Woonsocket. B. has a son who is about to marry a daughter of A. The daughter of A. is living with Mr. B., and will be married at the house of B., Mr. and Mrs. B. making the wedding. Now, how should the invitations read—the compliments of Mr. and Mrs. B., (they making the wedding,) or compliments of Mr. and Mrs. A., the bride's parents? Please do not lay this aside, as it is of great importance to the parties interested. By answering in your next, you will oblige." If Mrs. B. is, for mutual convenience, giving the wedding breakfast, etc., which is proper and intelligible, the invitations go in the name of Mr. and Mrs. B. For Mr. and Mrs. A. to issue the invitations would be unintelligible, except on the theory that Mr. B. kept a hotel.

R. W. C. (Chattanooga) says: "During an insurrection in India, one of the English generals captured Scinde, and he telegraphed to his government when he was in the city, *Peccavi.* At another time Lord Havelock, I believe it was, captured Lucknow, and, to be even with the former general, telegraphed to his government a word or words signifying 'I am in Luck now.' Will you please inform me, through your columns, what that word, or words, was, and oblige?" We think it very unlikely that Havelock did anything peculiar in Lucknow in order "to be even" with anybody, and we do not remember anything peculiar about his telegram. But if the subject is of importance we refer you to J. C. Marshman's Life of Havelock, which is full and reliable, and in which details are likely to be given.

F. L. (Hopkinsville, Ky.) writes: "When a person takes a Thanksgiving dinner with a friend, does true politeness require him to make, either at his departure or at the table, any complimentary remarks on the dinner? Please answer, through columns of *Ledger*, and oblige." No. It is proper enough to say at leaving, "It has been a very pleasant evening," or something of that kind. To comment on the dinner would imply that you were unfamiliar with a good dinner. "Come and dine with me," said a good-natured man to his friend, "but don't expect anything particular, only a potato and a bit of beef." "Just my dinner to a T," said the friend, who was from the island of good-nature, "*barrin' the beef.*"

INQUIRER (Guilford) says: "I have been reading Tennyson's poems, and cannot ascertain who his "St. Simon Stylites" was. Will you please tell me whether there was such a saint, in what age he lived, and why he martyred himself?" One of the forms of fanaticism of the early middle ages in the East, was to live on the top of pillars, and so deprive one's self of rest and comfort for the supposed good of the soul. There were many such pillar-saints, and even many Simons. "Stylites" means (it is a Greek word) "of a pillar." The Simon, who is most famous, is said to have lived and died near Antioch, in the fifth century. The history of such men is mixed up with much legend and exaggeration. This folly had victims down till the thirteenth century.

PHILADELPHIA says: "How should young ladies treat young gentlemen who are very self-conceited." Keep away from them entirely.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER to the *Ledger* writes feelingly on a subject which appeals to many hearts. She says: "I have been a reader of your valuable paper for years, and I feel a great interest in all the teachings therein. In looking over the *Ledger* dated December 1st, I noticed a piece entitled, 'Keep watch over your own heart,' and it touched my feelings more than anything I have seen in some time. You speak of the sorrow that comes of the neglect to guard one's own affections. Oh, if the world only knew all the sorrow it causes, what amazement there would be! How many poor girls go about suffering whose pride keeps them from telling of it! You say, 'Keep a strict watch over your affections.' Did you think how hard it is to keep such a guard? Did you think of the kind, tender heart that is longing for love, kindness, and affection, when she meets one that she thinks she could love, whose every action and look is kind and gentle, and she twines her affections around him as a vine twines itself around a tree that comes in its way? And does that tree feel how the vine loves to cling to it for support? No; no more than does he whom she has twined her affections around. He is like the tree; he needs not the support of anything stronger. But if the tree be taken away, how fares it with the vine? It is ready to drop. Does it not need sympathy and protection? So does she whose affections have been trampled upon. And, in such a case, who is the guilty one? Is it not he who laughs so lightly about his 'summer pastime,' as he calls it? Oh, teach him that he is the one who is to blame! He could see that she was learning to love him, and he cared nothing for her. Does not this show that the female has the most affection? It certainly does. Then pity her; she needs pity; she does not feel as she should about telling it, and, what is more, the mothers do not do their duty as to these matters to their daughters. If they did, girls would be more free to tell to them their secrets, and so be guarded by a mother's watchfulness and love. Then blame not the woman who forgets to keep watch over her own heart, but pity her rather."

JACOB writes: "I am twenty-three years old. About two years ago I commenced keeping company with a young lady, with whom I have been acquainted for some time. After a year's courtship we became engaged, though our parents do not know it. But before we became engaged she was forbidden to keep company with me, which she said she would not do, but would meet me when it was convenient. Then some scandalous reports were circulated about me, which she says she did not believe; but she got mad at me and would not speak to me, or I to her, for some time. That was when she was receiving the attentions of another young man; but when he went away she repented, and wrote me a letter asking me to forgive her, which I did, and then we were very friendly for some time. But lately there is another young man whose attentions she receives. She takes long rides with him, and goes to parties with him, and she will hardly notice me. Sometimes, when none of her admirers are around, she treats me very friendly, and when we are alone she acts as if she loved me. She says she loves me every time she sees me, and I like her very much. But I cannot trust her, for I have caught her in some barefaced falsehoods, trying to deceive me and make me believe that she does not receive the attentions of others as she receives mine; but I hear different from others. She is called a flirt, and most all the boys are afraid to go with her. Now, do you think she acts right by keeping so many young men waiting on her, when we are engaged? Do you think she would act that way after we were married? Would you break the engagement, or let it stand? I like her very much, and will wait for your advice." According to your statement, the girl is a deceitful and disloyal creature whom it would be folly for you to marry. She deceives her parents, and she tries to deceive you, and tells you falsehoods. Such a girl is not to be trusted.

DIAMOND writes: "I have been living South for about seven years, where I formed the acquaintance of a young lady. With the consent of her parents, I visited her for nearly two years. I think the young lady thought just as much of me as I did of her, at the time. I was of a rather lively disposition, and sometimes, perhaps, took a drink or two more than I should have taken. So, all at once, I noticed that her actions toward me became rather cool, and one of my friends, who also visited the house, told me that she would prefer my staying away, which I did. This demoralized me to such an extent that I got so careless and reckless I didn't care what became of me. I got to drinking harder than ever, got into bad company, and involved myself in debts which I was unable to pay, and consequently was compelled to run away from there. I am now living here in the city. I don't drink anything at all now, and am in a fair way of making money. I have also, since my arrival here, met some near relatives to the young lady in question, who told me that some of my best friends went and talked against me to her—that it was only their fault, and that she always thought a great deal of me. What would you do in my place?" You might write to the young lady, and state your case to her, and await the result. According to your own statement, your record is so bad that it is probable she and her parents will decline any further acquaintance with you; but you would be none the worse off for trying. Whatever the result of your effort may be, so far as the young lady and her friends are concerned, you should not let it "demoralize" you again. By pursuing an upright and manly course, you can at last win satisfactory results and as good a wife as you may deserve.

Y. F. (New Jersey) writes: "I come to you with a subject that has caused me many very dark and sorrowful hours. About four years ago I was waiting on a lady to whom I had been paying my attentions for about a year. I became somewhat tired of her company, so I quit her and went with another for about one year and a half; then I quit going with her, and after a short time I commenced going with the lady No. 1 again, and about a year ago I became engaged to her. Now, the trouble is this: I find, after my giving up No. 2's company and being away from her, that my love for her increases, and my love for No. 1 decreases every day. The reason for my quitting No. 2 and engaging myself to No. 1 was this: My father had some dislike for No. 2, and made a great fuss about my going with her, and as I always like to obey my parents, I quit going with No. 2 and engaged myself to No. 1, whom I have never loved as I do No. 2. Now, I would like you to tell me how I can break that engagement with No. 1 and free myself so I can marry No. 2, or any one else I choose without No. 1 or her folks being able to do anything with me; for I can never marry No. 1 and live happy with her. If I have to marry her, I will leave here immediately for some other country. Help me if you can, for this is working heavily on my mind, and I fear I will lose my mind if this is not settled soon satisfactorily." If the lady to whom you are engaged will not relinquish the engagement, you cannot evade her right to marry you except by exposing yourself to an action for breach of promise. Probably if you should tell her what you have told us, she would spurn you from her presence, and refuse to marry you under any circumstances. Then you would be free.

J. B. (New York) writes: "I am a young man, eighteen years of age, and desirous of entering the U. S. Navy. My present employment will end about the first of January, and as I know what it is to be without work, I write to you asking your advice and instruction how to enter the navy, and as to the work required and the hours. Do not think that I want to go in the navy because I think it all play and adventure, and no work. I merely want to enlist, rather than go without work and be a burden on my parents, who have enough to do to get along without my being a burden on them. I have a friend, who is about my age and height—five feet seven inches. My weight is 120 lbs., and his 110. He would like to enter with me. By letting us know through your columns as soon as possible, you will confer a great favor." Write to the Secretary of the Navy, at Washington, D. C., stating what you want, and asking for information, and you will probably be fully instructed as to all the points involved, or else be referred to some naval recruiting station, where you can personally learn what you desire to know.

MARION KEITH (Milwaukee) says: "One who has spent many pleasant evenings reading the *Ledger*, would like to settle a dispute which she had with a young lady friend, and therefore comes to you for advice. She thinks that a young lady having unmarried sisters older than herself is entitled to be called by her Christian name with 'Miss' prefixed; while I think the oldest unmarried sister should be called Miss ——, the second Miss Mary, or whatever her name may be, and the third, fourth, and so on, should be simply called by her Christian name. Also: Is it correct to say, Miss Smith, or Smith, when some one inquires your name?" All younger sisters are described by their Christian names with the prefix of Miss. You had better say "Miss Smith" when asked your name in proper circumstances.

DAISY AND POPPY (Villisca, Iowa) say: "Being young ladies of limited education, and not having access to books of etiquette, we come to you to answer a few questions. 1. Is it considered etiquette for a young gentleman, escorting a young lady to church or any public entertainment, to enter the door first? 2. When receiving a gentleman caller, should the lady ask him to be seated and to remove his hat, or should he find a seat for himself, and keep his hat in hand?" (1.) A gentleman usually opens the door and allows a lady to precede him. (2.) A lady is not supposed to direct a gentleman who calls as to his clothing; but an acquaintance may be set at his ease by telling him to take off his coat, or place his hat on the table.

HENRY (Nebraska) says: "Please answer in the *Ledger:* We have a debating society in our place. At a meeting last week, in the 'order of business,' the Finance Committee were called to report. But one member was present and he approved several bills against the society thus: 'Minority Report of Finance Committee. Approved: Wm. Marvin, Member of Finance Committee.' I objected to this report being received, as I considered it erroneous to style it as above, but the society sustained the report." Well: we do not see what we can do about it. We cannot pronounce—even if asked to do so—on ex-parte evidence. If there is a question in your mind, why, have it up for debate.

A. R. writes: "I am a little girl, thirteen years old. I have been a reader of your valuable paper for several years, and have not bothered you with a question before. I wish you would give me your advice in a matter that concerns me much. Do you think it proper that a girl of my age should attend a school at the expense of some kind friends? My parents are poor and unable to send me to school and pay for the same, and I am very anxious to obtain a good education." That would depend on the kind of school to which they wished to send you, and on all the circumstances of the case. Your parents, knowing all about the matter, should be able to judge for themselves whether it would be best for you to accept the offer or not.

JOSIE says: "Do you not think that when two people, a lady and gentleman, between twenty-four and thirty years of age, are engaged and have been in love from childhood, that it is about time there was a wedding?" That depends. There may be a committee on "ways and means" whose report is not given in, or is unfavorable.

ETIQUETTE (Philadelphia) says: "Is it etiquette for a gentleman who is in mourning to send cards to his lady friends on New Year's day, wishing them a happy New Year. By answering this you will oblige." There is no rule on the subject. Some do it. Some do not. The card when sent should be without anything but the name and address. The black edge explains its being sent.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*